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THE MOUNT

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THE MOUNT:

SPEECH FROM ITS ENGLISH HEIGHTS.

BY

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Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.'

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1878.

PREFACE.

MORE is meant by this piece of work than literary criticism. What literature appears, is here because of its relation to thoughts that may have future richer perhaps perfect shape. Not only individual but popular advance can be caused by the dreams which like Moses rods have the power of becoming budding living energising fact.

Why thinkers are freely dealt with is because of the importance they bear to vital thought. Each of the cavaliers of beauty's empire accepts thrust meant gallantly because he as frankly takes his own charging turn in the battle.

Another word is that if in the world titles and precedence are of indispensable necessity, even as the check upon prides of the cruder kind, there should be in the republic of letters as wise equality of name and simplicity of approach as possible, to remind all

who possess dignities that there are for no human souls any steady positions apart from merit. High and advancing civilisations require, indeed, less and less of personal rule; but it is only in the world of literature that there can be some approach to the ideal where inequality, though ever present, need be least asserted.

LONDON: 1877.

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THE MOUNT.

CHAPTER I.

VOICES IN THE VALLEYS.

SHAKESPEARE is too much celebrated in one direction, and has not his proper rights in another. When he is in the lower fields of his art his eminence over all writers is, curiously enough to trained ears, loudly proclaimed; but where he steps into the inmost place of poetry his admirers say little or nothing of his doings. Few or none of the four to five hundred critics have steadily recognised him in his noblest garments; where his strength really is they have not discovered; the value of their high opinions of him is mainly because instinctive, not because perceptive.

It need not take the time so much writing might suggest as necessary to find what the witness of the cloud of commentators is. Though cynics have said so too often to be at all novel or agreeable, there is wonderful uniformity with them of limp praise, giddy devotion, prosy annotation, dreary commonplace, the variety being apparent, not real. The burden of the tales is generally

the same. Anything like intellectual struggle for distinct seeing is easily remarked. *Rari nantes in gurgite vasto* very soon becomes the conviction of one in search of living souls in this waste of criticism. Able in their own provinces of effort they for the most part sink here beyond recovery. What Johnson, well named the bow-wow of his age, hinted of original work, may be applied with more force to the essentially unoriginal labours of those who have undertaken to explain the 'dreamer': it does not take long to tear the heart out of most books. The Doctor himself, Malone, Steevens, Theobald, Rowe, Rymer, Gildon, Hanmer, Reed, Drake, Capell, Pope, Dennis, Goldsmith, Campbell, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Jeffrey, Chalmers, Singer, Symmons, Staunton, Craik, Horne, Dyce, Collier, Procter, Halliwell, Hunter, Ingram, Swinburne, Dowden, and many a fated one beside, not only English but German and French, have gone on rhapsodising or prosing, emending or spoiling, all the time looking at the less-inspiring side of the picture of him. To take the phrase of Madame de Staël, the hurricane in a petticoat, whose own Rousseau-inspired genius fails her in this region to unusual extent, they have been 'admiring the canvas side of the Gobelin tapestry,' finding technical beauties that were, except for artisans and not for artists, as well undiscovered.

What plain courage is required to take such firm stand as this comes from the fact that in alpine regions of human achievement the solitary travellers, by very special luck, in addition to nature's gift of muscle, and will to use it, alone get to the heights: the crowds, the learned one also, cannot rise, or will not, for there is much in the

want of effort, high enough for clear sight; thought follows thought with them, and nothing is done. Too often there are also men of genius, like Belacqua in the *Purgatorio*, whose hearts fail; their fear being that after all the struggle upwards the angel will not open Paradiso to them. Braver stronger souls do not count on possible loss of labour, for they know that transformation has strange doors. Little expeditions made up the heights are valuable for the health of the half-willed ones, and their reports are helpful to circles near them; but the self-sacrifice of the few, the utter devotion to genuine toil of climbing, alone can bring down the news that is as good for the child as for the sage.

Those who have been holidaying up the Shakespearean path on the mount know myriads of things. Some can tell how many lines of each piece he wrote, how many he appropriated, or, in the language of present days, plagiarised, how many he improved, what he wrote when a youth, what when in his manhood, what when in his decline. Orphean delicacy of musical perception, waging continual war against Horatian thumb and digital theory of verse, has got still minuter intelligence. But to this, Suspicion, thinking that there is too much protest, answers, flippantly it may be, but musically too, fiddlestick! her main difficulty being that ears are so different in various ways. To make the round-throated Marlowe, whose raucous cobbler-like elementary atheism prevented him from knowing what poetry was, the master of Shakespeare, is peculiar judgment! He took not such King Cambyses for leader, a sounding mouther who had no deeper appreciation of the world's mystery than the rudest

clown, as how Doctor Faustus fears red-hot hell-fire shows well enough. To talk of him as the maker of blank verse is another quaint thing. The youth was a developed specimen of the Bombastes Furioso that is prevalent in all periods, the antithesis to Spensers, Shakespeares, and the other elect poets of humanity.

Some light-footed gentry can metaphysically describe the characters, in themselves, as in their relations to each other; can show from what old tales most if not all the plays have had their resurrection; can tell why the choice of matter legendary and mytho-historic is best for rousing and retaining popular interest.

Whatever value these partial displayings may have for many, to the artist, or to him who wishes to see the glory of the artist's work that he may tell others that light still shines, such knowledge is but husk. It gets very tiresome, because one goes back to the actual reading of the subject of all the discussion, not, as he ought to be, if criticism fulfil its purpose, better armed, but weaker and less of a literary soldier than before. Though it is not apparent that he knew much Shakespearean literature, there would seem to be not a little reason for Washington Irving's fear and complaint that the poet is 'gradually assuming the tint of age,' and that his 'whole form is overrun by a profusion of commentators, who, like clambering vines and creepers, almost bury the noble plant that upholds them.'

The later idea with the solemn merryandrews of forming themselves into societies, is an additional terror to the former ones, because it organises chaos for the direct purpose of making greater chaos than ever. As to getting

information from them, this of poetry is just the sphere where the wonderful division of labour key to everything is worthless, nay, is positively mischievous. Pedantic Jeffrey himself could see that high art cannot be advanced by this instrument of the mechanical arts. For his life an original spirit will shun such whirlpools of confusion. We have a thousandfold too many facts and hints of the external useless kind already. He who is wise knows that there is no royal road to the city of art, and that solitude, which is the discipline such collections of casuals cannot endure, is the fixed condition of best work. Amusement may or may not be legitimate, but it must have no other name than its own. What is called the devotion of a life to the study of this or the other artist is seldom other than a suicidal and homicidal thing. It can well be put whether the parochialising of great men may not be in some way an immoral kind of pursuit. If the body is more than raiment, the soul is more than body; and to thinkers who do not, like the frequently far more than sublime Hugo, vanish incontinently in universals, it is particular truth that holding our steps upwards to the ideal is salvation, and downward towards trifle, like the history of Anne Hathaway's bed, damnation. We are sufficiently inclined to note the baldness of Cæsaric heads without specially organised education in this pre-Raphaelitic direction. Poetry is the top of culture or worship, and by it we strain after ideal man, not accidental, after the God in us. When we are in high regions let us not have any fact that we cannot idealise, and this of poetry is the highest sphere. Must one grind his nose on the truth that Keats had dull days when

drink and the devil were his friends, or judicialise the problem whether Shakespeare died from a debauch, before one can have soul-liftings with them on the divine spirit's wings?

Palgrave, whose canons of art are the very good elementary but ever essential ones of unresting labour and sheer honesty, has, with mistaken zeal, wished that as art is the outcome of the life of an artist, we, the artistic and the inartistic souls, should know all about his washing-bills, and his ways of dealing with friends and others in detail. This is the spirit of the prurient science that invades the joyful mysterious to find only the disgusting. Unfortunately for such kind of intelligence the ideals of life are graded infinitely. The highest style of life never has been and never will be according to Mrs. Grundy's rules, its purpose being just to renovate and elevate that lady's ideas as much as possible. Father and mother, sisters and brothers, to some of the best souls in the world have become simply persons of the human family. For their kingdom to be got to man they cut off wife, child, hand, if offence come. We know what condemnation the small kinds of minute philosophy have had for some of the supremely unselfish ones of the world's history. With all his honesty and hewing of things to the block, Winwood Reade does not understand the poetic spirits, or he would hew less and love more. What seeming freedom they take is the necessity laid upon them of following their very best. Luther the monk wished to marry a nun, therefore the Reformation, is a Roman Catholic example of wisdom drawn from little facts. That Thorvaldsen, whose *Night*, Yendys, a far greater

thinker than poet, has explained with the right appreciation, put his desire after art for man before even his consanguinities and *belles passions*, is Palgrave's ground of condemnation of him. So, to some, Goethe, the hottest most loving soul in Europe for many generations, was cold, selfish, and, Heavens! unkind to woman. The man who finds woman the last idol of worship before divine glory melts personality! While making his biblical fanatical anachronistic but great picture of a state or commonwealth, Cromwell did not tell everybody what his plans for the future were, therefore a hypocrite; he aimed always at the throne, therefore a rebel: these are other similar findings of the weakly spirits from their acquaintance with isolated moral facts in natures too eager for them to understand. The scalpel of analysis will never find the secret of those, to provincial and insular eyes, eccentricities that are thought to be the spots, when not crimes, but that really are the glories or pearls of great men, which must not be cast indiscriminately. The high souls, who alone are competent to appreciate such facts, though they do not need to hunt after them for information that comes better otherwise, have quite other roads than these to find their brothers. There are a few hearts born to the making of beauty or art for the many's good through the ages, and the ordinary relations have not the aspect to them that they have to the contemporary self-seekers, whether as individuals, families, or even nations. Precision of little minds is not knowledge. Mock science intrudes its silly microscopic eyes into strange places. One of its votaries, albeit an official in the spiritual division of society, used to find its praise in its skill of ex-

amining the nails that had part in the world's greatest event. Societies and men of such temper are pioneers of death, whether they know so or not. Better ten thousand times read some art with indifferent insight, if there is admiration of sincere kind as far as it can reach, than know all the facts of all the annotators about it. In the spots on the face of the moon, which are certainly undoubted facts, one of them finds the hieroglyphic pictorial *raison d'être* of Shakespeare's plays, Butler's *Hudibras*, etc.! But he may be considered the worst case; there is some skill with many. Let us have truth by all means, but when there is a large choice, let us have elevating humanising truths in preference to dead, or, what are worse, live lunatic devilish ones. Certain things connected with the great are interesting, no doubt, just as certain others are that must be hidden for nobility of manhood and womanhood. On your peril go after your unhallowed curiosity an inch, and it is unhallowed the moment it loses relation to the highest good of mankind, to paradise, to the ideal. Crying after close possession of suns or moons, if not imbecile, is infantine.

The whole trade of note-making to poetry is either well-meaning mistake or conceit or degeneracy. Even editing, which has good ground for its existence, is apt to become a nuisance, and real stone of offence. Who cares that has a spark of culture of the right kind, to hear a hack cicerone repeating his monologue through statuary or other art? Annotators are of little possible use, and of sufficient annoyance to cultivated readers: to the ignorant they are helpful to the smallest, if any, degree; indeed, in most cases they take them by the shortest cuts

from contemplation of the poem to the externality of the parasitic remarks. The young essayist on criticism of Queen Anne's time says, with his alarmingly precocious wisdom,

> 'Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey,
> Nor time nor moths e'er spoil so much as they.'

And Shakespeare, with all the modern appliances to help them, is threatened to be obscured still more than he is by new races of busybodies, who are on the hunt for notoriety, caring only to get themselves attached to the triumphal procession of a famous soul. What was unfortunately done to Greek and Roman classics they hope to do for ours!

It may or may not be doubtful whether in this class must go Furnivall and Fleay. Not to feel obliged to them personally for their willing effort is impossible, but that is not the question. Both, however, have done better things than clerking numbers and making notes. Chaucer, as obsolete to some extent, needed devotion, at least editorial. Fleay's rational explanation of *The Sonnets* is work, but he is quite out of the element where Shakespeare wrought, and his explanation is only fit for commonplace prose culture. The ideal man, the will divine, the Narcissus in love with himself, is the subject of most of the sonnets; and, as to the others, the black but comely lady, among transforming visions and memories, joyful and sad, his own lady playing part in them, means popular religion, theology, the church. The rest only opens to any really ingenious ingenuous mind to discover for his own intellectual benefit. Shelley's *Epipsychidion* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam* are little more than plainer

paraphrases of these sonnets. They knew what spiritual treasure was in this mine, and dug in it nobly and successfully. Their work looks somewhat cheap also when compared with the original.

To take high examples, which if misleading to some are very suggestive to others, there need be no hesitation in saying that by far the least poetical and most tell-tale actions of Byron, Southey, Moore, Wordsworth, and Scott, were just the mistake of adding explanations and notes to poetry. It were not a wild statement to risk that they thus showed they did not at all intellectually know what the art they wrought in was. One is reminded by such conjunction of the mechanical music that is noted with 'Here the guns are fired,' 'The bugle sounds,' 'The charge is made.'

Annotators should cut their initials elsewhere than on statues of fame; let them at least collect their thoughts in books apart from the poet's work, since they will write what is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred misinterpretation, as might be expected if it needs genius to understand a poet fully. When a work of art cannot explain itself it is not such at all, strictly speaking. Pictures with poetical verses tagged are not art but illustrations. A work of art ought to have sufficient appeal for all cultures. Its purpose is elevation of soul, not knowledge, which is got in the preparatory fields of prose and experience. Those requiring to be nudged at elbow with notes are not in a state of culture when art can be of value to them. Byron's fine verses on the *Venus de Medici*, in *Childe Harold*, apply:

'Away!—there need no words nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have eyes!'

We want no descriptions of the indescribable. They are impertinence. So thought, instinctively rather than independently, but truly, the most skilful of modern describers. If it might please foolish science to have the *Venus de Melos* pasted over with exact description of each muscle, as quack phrenologists mark the stucco skulls which are their deceiving instruments, it could not delight wisdom. A poem should have its independence preserved from such falsehood and destruction as carefully as fine sculpture is protected from the ambition for immortality of Smith Jones or Robinson when in their holiday paint and with their pocket tomahawks in best order. We should not tolerate appreciations of the attitude of the *Apollo Belvedere.* Lessing, in his *Laocoon,* showing that the several arts cannot invade or usurp each others' provinces without degradation, 'colours not being tones nor ears eyes,' uses statuary, especially its *Prometheus Vinctus,* for the composition of his great aesthetic theory, a theory that wounds to the death all monster Wagnerian or other eclecticisms in art: entirely different intellectual work from maudlin search after detached beauties, mangled lifeless corrupting. It is said Herod had gold spikes on the top of the temple of Jerusalem for sanitary purposes: why cannot something be invented to keep the harpies off our sacred places? When the days of ruin come they will have their prey, but is it ruin yet with the Elizabethan cathedral? Can we not worship there without restoration and dilletantism some time still?

Plumptre, who translates Sophocles so gracefully, is a most interesting example of good instinct as to note-making, but his head was weak enough to allow him to apologise in his preface because he could not commit the Etruscanism of explanation. His position, though so negative, is more convincing to the mind as to the rights of the matter, than a hundred volumes of chaff-cutting logic or howling naked sham-true realism.

There is full reservation to be made for healthy masculine teaching of what is in skilled work to those who are searching for knowledge. The present is an attempt just in this field. The vital system of daily, weekly, and occasional exposition, spoken or printed, of poetic matter, must not be confounded with the irreverent impudent business of small minds finding fault and making emendation as to the structures of a great artist, minds that judge details from their own limited seeing, as if they were masters of the master. If a man has the humble edifying spirit, he shows as he can, to the weaker or worldly-busy audience or readers, the aim of him with whom he tries to bring them into life-giving communion. The effacement of himself and the publication of the doctrines are, for example, the endeavours of the true preacher, as indeed of every artist. Those who deal powerfully with poetry in this reverent temper, the opposite to the self-adoration too prevalent in secular and so-called sacred spheres, are the guardians of what is best in the world, and deserve next place of honour to the supreme energisers themselves. Among the annotators you will not find them, if of sufficient literary power to recognise the position. The flies on the wheel think

they make the speed of the poetic chariot. Wise men see more than the little bit of the rim, and they are respectful, and tell those that need knowledge what their thoughts are of the Apollo, without daring to cling to his car. They know that the sun is better where it is than under the scalpel or other instruments of the intense scientists. This is the most saving attitude, too, for themselves and their 'flocks,' wonder becoming a joyous elevating presence in their souls; while they who scratch their puny names and thoughts side by side with those of first souls, are puffed up with emptiness that leaves them unable to recognise the general laughter at their supreme gestures till some kind hand wipes them out of existence once for all.

Many expository thoughtful writers there are, who must be very useful to limited cultures; but it cannot be denied, after wide weary search, that dearth of help or guidance prevails for the more daring and determined seekers after knowledge and wisdom in the Shakespearean part of the poetic country.

CHAPTER II.

TRAVELLERS.

WHEN we leave the Inferno of little knowledge we do not get into a very bright land. Carlyle, Coleridge, Emerson, Goethe, the Schlegels, and Hugo blazon, some of them perhaps designedly, more than explain. Heroics from such energising souls are leadings on the right path, but some of us have walked long and reverently behind them on the present quest, and when their furthest words of direction were heard, our hearts fell into strange misgivings as to the elect human souls, and the troubled question rose that surely, if they had chosen, they could have told us much more. It grows a very fixed idea that Goethe, at all events, saw the secret art of Shakespeare.

That he embodied, as Carlyle puts it, 'the outer life of our Europe as developed then, its chivalries, courtesies, humours, ambitions, what practical way of thinking, acting, looking at the world, men then had,' and that 'he has given us its practice or body,' are no doubt wise thoughts, but they are vague as headlands through a fog, and might suit perhaps such comparatively loose and essentially superficial, however charming, writers as Lytton, Scott, Dickens, Balzac, paying a little atten-

tion to date, quite as well as this worker. That he 'is the greatest of intellects,' and that it is 'an unconscious intellect,' are also of the same nature, yet some favour, though only some, may be specially reserved for the characteristic, 'unconscious.' Perhaps it may be discovered that what seems unconscious to the prosaic, or even to the moderately poetic and highly appreciative gaze, is that clearest inmost consciousness which is the crowning property possibly of the sanest minds. No one can do living work without being lost in it, but his perceptions and judgment are then most alive. The magician did not show his processes if he wished his miracles to have their valuable effect, and the artist hides his consciousness if he can, it may for the present be guessed. The sincere essayist, whose too eager realism sent him into the prose which he lauds, in his own despite evermore, being a one century instead of an every century man, possesses all the elements of a poet himself, except music, though this is an infinite exception, since it marks whether the harmonic love that is inspiration or rhythmical processional design tunes the soul, and he has one sentence showing his feeling, if not very sure sight, as to the root of the matter. 'Alas, Shakspeare had to write for the Globe playhouse: his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould.' This stoical puritan accepts the inevitable with the thought, '*Disjecta membra* are all that we find of any poet, or of any man.' He, with all the cunning secrets he has displayed, has stopped a step short of discovering the whole man here, who *did* free himself from this mould, and who has left us, when we recognise his smiling daughters, not *disjecta membra,* but living

forms of divine beauty, to be won ever and only by the worthiest suitors.

A truly poetic work is never of the class *disjecta membra*, though it is of the necessary nature of all prose to be so. Was it not Durer who said of one of his paintings that it was as well done as it could be done? And the saying has the best of all modesty in it, that of truth, for every genuine artist knows that a poetic unity can and ought to be an absolute perfection, a complete symbol of an inner beauty that the sufficient contemplating intellect will read without possibility of mistake. As in mathematics there can be the absolute arrival, so in art also there can, and only in those two regions does man ever actually stand face to face with the infinite, the movement of mathematics being ultimately towards the infinitely little, as that of art is towards the boundless great. The lilies neither toiling nor spinning yet more gloriously arrayed than the richest king, is a completion of poetic embodiment which time or place will never flaw; and that this vision of beauty came forth to existence clothed with sufficient music or rhythm requires no proof. There are parables more finished than any gems of the earth, and a thousandfold more immortal. Clearer and more lasting than diamond is the dream of the inmost sight when set out in harmonical shape, whether for sight, hearing, or for other gates of sense where the soul and its court crowd to divine the world that is unlimited. The inner world of beauty is a finished world, and the great contemplating intellect can recognise the archetype within an embodiment that may not be but partial. Only the strongest and most faithful can all but make the complete

symbol, the absolute archetype. Every symbol, however, is perfect to the soul which by its means can see the 'dream.'

Carlyle's sympathetic insight is of much stronger temper than his artistic faculty, and for this he is so much less to be trusted than the sufficient poets. Perhaps there is no better standing ground than the Shakespearean from which to measure, for intellectual satisfaction, not only the *facile princeps*, but the other disciples of the Goethean school. On an isthmus of a middle state between prose and poetry stand Kingsley, Robertson, Brooke, Maurice, Froude, Helps, Arnold, Stanley, and, though there are further powerful cross-lights from deep love of Dante, innate harmonic feeling and sight of art, and a characteristic but not masculine enough desire after form in him, which is their deficiency, the graceful swerver, Ruskin. To talk of what others make is so much easier than to make; needs so much less self-denial, chaste continence, restrained and therefore the more vigorous vigour! All of them are, more and less, hearts which failed in gift or courage when the highest, and of necessity most toilsome, path of art opened to them. They caught at casual intense because vague side creeds of life rather than go straight up the Sinai where the heaven's terrors, and glories also, are only to be mastered. Ruskin's thoughts, and they are of best quality of these levels, are like rare fruit in crude pudding. As the stars, perhaps we cannot but touch the meridian fixed for us, and then must 'step westward' to our setting. It is a question entirely without detraction whether the famous German himself gained the perfect freedom in the zenith quarter, in the fullest

light of the artistic paradise. None of them can be said to see clearly and continuously what the strongest masters saw, and worked on, that the philosophy universal, which is one of the oldest of the world's philosophies, the illusion of progress, science, evolution, development, civilisation, humanity, has nothing to say to genius as to the essential value of its products. Whether all things be very good or very bad, or neither, they cannot fix.

Polity waves ebb and flow eternally, mere optimists and pessimists, half-seers, being equally strong, equally weak, the Shelleys and Staëls *versus* Schopenhauers and Hartmanns. Ordinary optimism and pessimism are the result of a confusion of thought that does not distinguish the provinces of the individual and of the race. The individual withers, is the pessimist's doctrine; the race higher and higher, is the optimistic dream. The truth includes the individual as forever potentially of the same importance, and the race actually rising and falling towards individual actuality of civilisation. The optimism that may well be considered fanciful is that of Hegel, Buckle, republicans like Hugo, Swinburne, Buchanan, Whitman, and the development men generally. It is all the 'becoming' with them, the better and still better. The philosophies of history that see everything ripening or condensing for the production of a Hegel or a Huxley, as the *summum bonum* of civilisation's arrival, Plato, Sophocles, Virgil nowhere in the dark past, are false optimism. What is called pessimism is simply the fanatical Christianity and Hindooism that have lost their founders' most original spirit, and that look on life as a probation for a higher state, the fond projecting in front of the illusion of

time. Schopenhauer has only changed words, inventing no new philosophy. His doctrine of the will being the thing-in-itself, the theory of the unconscious, is identical with the meaning of the best prayer, 'Thy will be done,' with Emerson's absorption into all-soul of the individual soul, with Plato's divine mania. Master poets know this doctrine, not only intellectually, like these scholastic philosophers, but lovingly, so that production follows; and this is genius. For little ones, as indeed for all, in vital respects, the philosophers are dry milch cows. The licentious loves of the mad theologians produce no fruit either. Some Germans are posturing as if they had lately found new transcendental wonders. The fact is that Goethe, the fount of most of these, had his philosophy from Shakespeare, when not from the same source whence both of them drew; and the newer Herbartian, Lotzean, and other schools, that try to make psychological approaches, through the individual, to science in its development aspects, are only prose expositors of his poetic aphorisms. From the English mind, Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume, German philosophy in what is modern of it, has come, Kant, Lessing, and the rest. Our periodical featherheads do not know that we dwell in the modern land of Canaan, of Hellas, of Rome. Pessimism is extreme Christianity with the very thinnest veil over it. What 'christian' but bewails the evil everywhere here on earth, and does not long for the rest that remaineth? This is Voltaire's bad citizen. But the optimist is apt to become, if ostensibly the good citizen, certainly as bad, by accepting the doctrine which was not that of Epicurus, 'Eat, drink, and be merry;' or the other, 'Bury yourself in the present, for we know

not of the morrow;' or Wordsworth's more ethereal all but true one, 'Here or not at all is our heaven,' not such high truth as the seeming equivalent of Goethe, 'Here is my America or nowhere!' Let us be fanatical or not, the furthest religious doctrines, those of India in their ascetic aspect of hatred to the body as a prison of the spirit, though full of evil consequences, are the same as the Christian, but not as those of the founder, practice being ever degradation. Their idea of life is Calvin's dogma of battle and victory for individuals elect. War, therefore, as a training, indeed the best, because severest, belongs essentially to such systems. The true souls do not stand on this 'struggle for existence temporal and eternal,' but accept glorious body, with the earth as their eternal ever-present home, peace and love providing for all, through whatever transformations. The pessimists go to an hysteric heaven and look down thence; the optimists stand on earth and too seldom look up. The man views round, above, and below.

Art, which, in its ultimate analysis, means moral obligation, that is, moral freedom, the rule of beauty, the free commonwealth of grace, is above time or place's training: it admits no rules from the utility of individual, national, or even of human experience in its ephemeral actual aspect. *Job*, one of the first poems, is as modern as *Faust*, perhaps more so, as symbolling a more vital original vision of the inner world. The poetic speeches and parables of Palestine are ever new by their inherent accuracy, neither limited by time, place, or nation.

The generous but wild rhapsodies of hero-worship and absolute human paternalities, the correlatives to ultramontane and monarchical infallibilities, vicarships and

one-man powers, true all of them so very far, but so very dangerous afterwards, as the spilt blood of many men in history signed to the devil of false philosophy proves, are not the fruits of the world's infinite souls.

His lecture in particular being witness, Carlyle knows neither Dante nor Shakespeare at their very best. He thought Homer must wane and die, indeed all the poets, which is possibility for the rightly illuminated only contemporary with the destruction of the faculty of imagination in man, or with the death of the race. The books may be lost, as so much of human feeling in Greek or other shape has already been, but Homeric mind, in other words, the power of archetypal insight, the flowering of forms in the brain of a loving seer, and their embodiment, will, while sky and earth last, never lose their appeal to humanity. Perhaps the exact answer to the melancholy prediction of oblivion is that whenever individual or nation at any period becomes completely modern, or better, living for short or long period in the world above time or place, he or it will sit with complete appreciation at the feet of Homer and the other masters. Horace's *Debemur morti nos nostraque* does not apply but with the usual exception. As Pope mourns in his beautiful *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*,

'Poets themselves must fall like those they sing;'

but that their poetry must is altogether another matter. There is a language of forms that never dies, and beyond its bounds, which are ever the same, man cannot go, will not go, because he there has his freedom. What poets mean by immortality is to learn this speech, to drink

beauty's cup. Histories, essays, may flee on the winds of the years; imaginations that are true are not dependent on the fleeting changes of the world of the understanding. The oblivionists do not clearly see the whole truth here.

As to the boasted advances of science and civilisation, in Homer, as in all the master spirits, there is more of sane science than in myriads of the Hippocrateses, Aristotles, Humboldts, Owens, Darwins, Tyndalls, and Huxleys. Busy, and earnestly valuably busy, specialists may be, but they toil chiefly in far corners of the field of knowledge, where the needed microscopes are apt to make molehills seem mountains, and vileness, wisely hidden, seem beauty. Some one has truly said that the philosopher is but the caricature of a man compared with the poet, and the explanation lies in this, that the latter holds his divinely directed ship of life in the centre of the stream of fact. In material science itself it is the plain 'power-seeking' poetically eager dreaming Jenners, Stephensons, Davys, Watts, never very remarkable as precisians, who give us new powers, not the men with the observatories, laboratories, and the dissecting-rooms.

Coleridge's admiration for Schiller is a measure of himself, and what he could have to say of Shakespeare must have been partial, when he saw so much in this overestimated thin tall-talking poet of Germany, too aspirant, by his own confession. Of dull imagination and having no hold of reality, is what Ruskin, with keen insight, sharpened by the fact that reality has so cruel a hold of him and his school, making their imaginations licentious, says of Friedrich. He is of high but distinctly secondary rank, because he cannot create ideal

true persons, just as the author of *The Ancient Mariner* for that and other reasons is. There stands a strong wall of division between such screaming gas-brained ballooning wandering men and the masters. 'The creative power and the intellectual energy fighting destructively in the *Poems*, at length in the drama were reconciled, and fought each with its shield before the breast of the other.' This is one of Coleridge's judgments, and we do not feel inclined to follow him trustfully after getting so regal a spirit its complete rest in such a broken shuffling though real enough sphere. Indeed, his views of the degrees in literature were never higher than Milton's early ones when he proposed to write epics of an historical kind. The drama, and Schiller as one of its best devotees, were to him the intolerable lights of what was possible for man. These short views are prevalent enough still, when there is less excuse for them, criticism being so general and popular. 'The Spinozistic deity,' 'an omnipotent creativeness,' are others of his random judgments. His luckiest guess as to the secret of this artist's skill was, 'The intense individualisation of genera.' He would have been still nearer if he had said, 'The intense generation of individuals.' But accurate knowledge is possible here, and guessing is therefore not to be endured.

On the whole, though there is much that is suggestive, it may be said of Coleridge's dealings with this writer, that they are almost purely illustrative of begging the question in criticism, very parallel, and in more ways than need be shown, to Aristotle's opinions περὶ ποιητικῆς, founded on Homer's merely external practice or embodiment as infallible. If either of the critics had cut, or

could have cut right down into the internal systems, they should certainly have found quite other and more fixed rules than those they have stated: as it is, they judge the city of poetry not from the citadel but from the walls, Coleridge having a roofless sad house of his own near the gate; they speak of the individual not as to his head and heart, but as to the colour of his hair, the style of dress, and such less essential relations. Carlyle, in his essay on the ethereal 'Novalis,' shows how elemenmentary Coleridge's philosophies of thought and art were, even though the best thinking of the time in England; but he is himself wrong in his over estimate of German as the higher literature of Europe, if only Dante had written.

The truth is no one can understand fully the artist unless he works on the same platform of excellence himself in one or other of the muse departments. If we could pass Phidias, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Durer, or, putting aside his conventional deaf music, chief source of crude Wagnerism, Beethoven, in through the externality of the English language and the *technique* of verse, they would recognise Shakespeare's melodic heart with its plastic and harmonic skill at once; as the latter, if franked through the technicalities of form and colour and sound, would be at unity with them in their symbolising of best thought by shape and tint and tone. It is certainly most useful to those of the plainer, and perhaps growing, culture, to hear criticism from those even a little above them: let them not, however, expect what can be trusted to the last except from the manhood of the master; and to his generous but discriminating help there is only one

road, but it is not the royal one of flippant idleness and irreverence. Philosophic Reynolds took snuff when the east wind of ignorance would try to get into his garden's favourite sheltered corners for inevitable damage. He preached the gospel of toil as the essential if not entire factor to make the genius. Μελέτη τὸ πᾶν. The highest masters soon discover that only if they could annihilate space and time would fellowship of the helpful kind be for them. There are gaps of centuries without the soul perfectly equipped for the immortal work. With their best excellences artists, for the general greater good of men, must ever be solitary. How many did Turner consult when the days of his power came? Like some other lonely prophets he did not shape his life to Lady Proper's rules. Good woman, she must leave such as he alone. So well did he know that he had the soul of the matter, that he cared not much whether the titles of his pictures were correct according to external tongues, though, like other great ones, he had darker hours that sent him to learning languages and writing bad, very bad, verse, as if he had not himself the true poetry. Devotion to his art, however, taught him the value of the essential. His indifference to the accidental is only a proof of the man's power: instead of its being license it is that freedom which consists in complete gradation of all things to their due spheres. When final skill is acquired, it is the ark of God in the care of the one high priest; and woe to himself, and boundless loss to the people, if he is unfaithful to the vital personal secret his reverent toil and the divine influence have given him. The moment he takes a lesson from one less than he, his

crown falls to the ground, for he has been unfaithful to the greatest light that earth knows. If a worker in the inner world of art each is a master and a king. When faith fails he becomes as another man.

The announcing, almost prophetic, Emerson, in his *staccato* touches, which are at once his glory and his nemesis, the making of his pregnant prose, by instinctive glimpsings, the destruction of his poetry, through absence of musical tension, fusion, glamour, and presence of hardness, comes often very near what is wanted in the present quest. By such phrasing as, 'he was the furthest reach of subtlety compatible with an individual self,' combined with the strong American, perhaps the cosmic and continual, consciousness, that the world still wants its 'poet-priest, a reconciler who shall not trifle with Shakespeare the player, nor grope in graves with Swedenborg the mourner, but who shall see, speak, and act with equal inspiration,' he has struck as pure and clear notes as have yet been heard on this subject.

The latter thought, indeed, has borne recent fruit in the heart of Max Müller, Emerson's generous admirer. The dream of the philologist that the one-man power will rise soon to head the missionary religion of Christianity for its conquest over the similar religions of Mahommedanism and Buddhism, over the exclusive ones of Judaism, Parseeism, and Brahminism, and over the mixed twin Chinese artistic codes of living, is an inspiring dream: yet the reconciliation can come, not from Christianity in a new missionary aspect, but only from the deepest strongest energy of original art; and it is possible that Shakespeare may have widely opened the way to the

highest of all aspirations, the unity of the world in the most beautiful aspects of life and intercourse. For this realisation, however, the cycles of time may be needed. The one strong heart has ever been the hope for humanity, though these two toilers grasp it as if a new revelation.

The last page of the American's essay on the representative poet is full of reach, but he knows not the supreme wisdom in the matter. The terror and infinite sadness of the New England thinker, then in the powerful middle period of his years, at the spectacle of a 'greatest spirit not wise for himself,' of the 'best poet leading an obscure and profane life,' 'using his genius for the public amusement,' are, though prophetic spirits do not invariably wear white neckcloths and go to church or temple on feast-days or sundays, since there have been Elijahs, Socrateses, Miltons, and others, vital signs of a deep quite unusual appreciation, but not the deepest, of him who has shone entirely through so terrible a devil's gloom, scattering away the waste pyrotechny of his unregenerate night forever, unregenerate actually, theologically, if one choose, since the greater can include the less. Emerson felt his own poetical and critical darkness when he wrote,

> 'I see all human wits
> Are measured but a few;
> Unmeasured still my Shakespeare sits,
> Lone as the blessed Jew.'

He could, strong as he certainly was, have sympathised with the delightful lackadaisical poet, when not the pedantically complaisant critic and saint, Arnold, in his sonnet on the same subject. Yet they are both generous

enough, no doubt, not to limit all seeing by their own; unlike some, who, if a *Tempest* or a *Comus* were still unwritten, would have it that, because they could not do it themselves, it should be impossible.

> 'Others abide our question—Thou art free!
> We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still!
> Out-topping knowledge.'

So true it is that the very skilful ones can rarely enter into the workshops of the divinely gifted, or, entering, can seldom take a likely tale back. The common reports of criticism, if useful to many, are, by the necessity that follows the fact of grades in culture, very infantine for most part to the stronger workers in the higher levels.

Even Emerson's 'mourning' of Swedenborg and his 'groping in graves' are not the deepest criticism of that Norse giant. Modern psychology has not *him* as the most singular example of a 'deranged balance,' and he was not *forced* to couch the laws he found in parable. Rather was he a mechanical fabler of facts, covering them with a veil not much more ingenious than, and far from so vitalising as Bunyan's ingenuous and, to limited degree, truly poetic, therefore, saving allegories. His angel seeing was not other than recognising the breezes on his cheeks, and such like variations of force. Leibnitz, with his monads and harmonies to reveal the whole mystery of man and his home, was quite the same kind of seer; and this may explain Carlyle's sight of the German as 'wiseacre.' Of which mechanicalities the latest is that of the unoriginal Erckmann-Chatrian of science who wrote *The Unseen Universe* as if spiritual things could be discerned otherwise than spiritually. 'He knows ye not, ye Powers,

who hath not wept upon his bed,' a deep soul thought. What would he say of a couple in a laboratory trying to turn them into specimens or foot pounds? Solitude is the sole road to the last height. The new-Jerusalem biblical theology, with its lord of mesmeric or psychical force, is, if much more powerful, an exactly parallel attempt with theirs in regard to science and theology, to marry the Hebraic catechisms of Swedish Lutheranism to material nature, to spiritual nature, if you please, for it is all one, it would seem, the last version of mud philosophy by Tyndall and Spencer being witness, when such height or depth of head theory is reached. He is no prophet, no 'lawgiver of mankind,' no 'last father in the church,' any more than Spinoza, Des Cartes, Leibnitz; any more than these amusing self-flatterers, hag-ridden with the thought that they have read the world's riddle, his Siamese disciples, the Tait-Stewart who have been popularising him: to Shakespeare, or to the master of whom he fain would make proselytes think he is the trusted confidant, as indeed to all the energisers in the divine, because living and not inorganic, element of heaven-descended art, he is, to use his own method, but as 'a dead horse.' Humanity puts the golden apple of influence neither into the keeping of government or philosophy, but into the fair hands of love, and hence the glorious war of life there ever is. The moody daughters of Tyndalls are cheap in the presence of the only Helen of Tyndarus. One of the world's best examples of knowledge or analysis, which, single, becomes forever the Apollyon of all reverence, Swedenborg certainly is, just as Shakespeare remains one of the best of knowledge and awe combined

with the wisdom which can construct, and as the 'blessed Jew' is that of the incarnate moral beatitude or most powerful because purest poetry.

What construction the analytic talent can make is of the type of Frankenstein's murderous creation. Here is the deadly source of all melodrama and sensationalism. The synthesising spirit of infinite love in chosen souls alone can create, not the conventionally but the infinitely moral pictures, in word or other substance, which will be the salvation of all that is best in them to the peoples. There is an eternal distinction between talent, the toil and skill of the understanding, what religious peasantry with true perception call head knowledge, and the genius that has been received into the sphere of the vision which knows, at intervals of passion for consequent production, conjunction with the divine mystery in the ἔκστασις. 'His face or work shines with heaven,' is the thought of pure hearts, of whatever culture, under the speech or word of a born speaker or writer. The doctrine of the theologians as to the new life is only the dim shadow of the change that must take place on the path of culture for the ideal-searching spirits. By and by, many will be strong enough to see intellectually, not merely feel emotionally, that the greatest and therefore most practical poet the world has yet experienced is the lone Nazarene, his domain being sometimes so epical as to realise an ideal life in full relation to the universe; that till a greater appear, if that be possible, he has no bounds, being the almighty influence; and that the conscious or unconscious burden of his appearance on earth was to show that the true life of man is art, the solitude

of the closet, the infinite presence in the loneness of prayer or study, being the holiest place of all places, because the fountain of unselfish deeds, the doctrine which has before, and will again, save nations, soon, perhaps, unite all the peoples under the one and ever supreme banner of poetry or purest word. If the word that is sincerest, most reverent, most beautiful, most musical, is the highest external art to arrive at, being less dependent on finite symbol than even music, which requires more media and instrumentalities, then we have found where the salvation of man is to be for evermore consciously sought, as it has always been the sangreal unconsciously or more or less consciously striven after. To the simplest as to the highest the edge of the poetic cup is free with its inspiring wine, and peace and glorified work are the rich fruits among the multitude of the new delights that will open to free hands.

Not from Swedenborg's workshop can come but the instruments of death. He knew nothing of the element where the divine and the personal are united and free. The undoubted materialist or positivist, for these two are one, that he was, quite as much as a Tyndall or Darwin of our day, if not more so when they claim the benefit of their higher moods, who used to wait for the third day after a burial to see the soul rising, let us not be deceived, doing so on scientific, or, rather, because such science is partial not universal, on scientist principles, from the body, never will have but pedants as worshippers in his temple, the men of head with a minimum of heart; and as these natures are wisely an infinitesimal minority in humanity, Emerson's wish of reconciliation is not more deeply

founded than this, that earth's truest prophet or poet-priest needs knowledge as one indispensable part of his equipment for the genuine work of beauty which gives all men entrance to the paradise that is our longed-for home. There no danger terrifies and no joy is absent, a heaven that is already here, the New Jerusalem of making beautiful things everywhere after the inward type of high desire, and with the makings making all the while the glories that angels ever contemplate with unceasing admiration, beautiful human lives, pedestalled on the rock of faithful knowledge under the healthy sky of loving awe. A moral system from Swedenborg's foundation, for Emerson recognises that there is not a vital person or individual in his whole philosophy, would be spiritual death to humanity, its joyous heart so full of mysterious affection, so desirous of beautiful forms in everything and everywhere, and so ready to follow from the cruder physical and moral forms to the spiritual when the leader comes who can give the genuine knowledge of them.

This immortal universal desire after higher beauty is the sole and sufficient proof that the universe throughout is a moral and spiritual mystery which has nothing in common with the atheistic precision that inevitably destroys all poetry, all flow of imaginative forms for the soul's delight and truly eternal life. The fools would take passion out of life, as if anything should remain after that but ashes of the same nature as the external world, the only subject of measurement where feeling need not be a function. The lovely throng of shapes will never end, and we are safe in the bosom of infinite affection.

Mozley has well said, in his somewhat lumbering shallow-deep way, that, for want of a personal object, though we may or may not accept his particular choice of person, 'atheistic morals are always stunted morals.' If atheism or materialism were practicable to its logical limits, and it is the genuine weakling elf-changed child, analogue of Luther's terror, of bloodless logic, there would be no such thing as morals at all, for men would be automata, Leibnitz's old theory that has lately been revived as if new by the sciolists, having nothing of the life that is now so beautiful, capable of assuming such wonderful grace when our eyes once open to see it by the filling of the heart with the right love of beauty. The very plainest persons, through the width of possible spiritual excellences that can transfigure all who live, become beautiful to the eyes of love. Nature herself, to the soul with power of healthy idealisation, is often all but glorified, her spirit drawn forward into free light from the phenomenal body under whose mixed beauty and ugliness she hides. The moral renovation by fresh forms of invented, or, rather, disclosed beauty, like sermons on the mounts, or like visions of cruder substance than word, in musical sound, in stone, in colours, down to new methods in the plainest toil of the poorest workman: this regeneration is the greatest good for man in time.

While taking care not to get wrecked on the Scylla of iron materialism, the fearful rock towards which drilling ultra-centralising educationists, with competition and standardism as whole code of youth's effort, would hold the helm of the rising race's ship, there is for the tried Ulysses, ruler of himself and his affairs, a Charybdis

of foolish mysticism, in form or aspiration, and of religious whirlpool, to be as studiously shunned. Dry systems of knowledge and the immoral greed of competition would, if allowed, end in mutiny and hell, discontent and revolution, as deliration over dead shapes of past mythologies finishes with idiocy and darkness, spiritism and idolatry, cowardice and cruelty. There must be no shutting of eyes in this strait. He of knowledge and awe and constructive wisdom is earth's beneficent guide, and his appeal, if a true master, is made at once to the aristocracy of intellect and love, and to the democracy of the valley. Somebody has wisely said, Write out of the heart. But, Who can? It is the highest of all rules, and the way to all the immortalities. The being who is heart, and finds all the knowledges or sciences through that only, but taking infinite pains that he does find them, he is of the heavens; and as the wave of love passes quite as purely through the simple hearts as through the enlightened, his influence for aspiration to all that is excellent is bounded least. The child that is the grown man, simple in soul and powerful in work, is the arrival at perfection in his kingdom.

Let Swedenborgs, Leibnitzes, Spinozas, Comtes, be recognised as but kings of facts, as valuable, with Beattie's adjective, 'peevish' pedants, as wiseacres that nature and the artist, and they only, can turn to high use. Beattie has told in his *Hermit* exactly what 'false science' does: it 'leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind.' They are not safe guides. The universe's unceasing flow they do not realise with the genuine co-operating vigour. Their imagination is spurious because cold fixed calcula-

ting. It is not imagination in any true sense. Rather is it a bias after ugliness, after separation, followed by dead construction, than a passion for beauty and structural organic growth. Their facts are infectious fatal things till the creators take them and put the motion of life and soul into them. As material as the wheels of a watch are their heavens and hells, harmonies, vortices, and nature-naturings. Attempts to marry spiritual imaginative substances as the bibles of the Hebrews, of the Christians, or of some other of the nations, ancient and modern, to their mechanicalities, are more ungraceful, and *therefore* damnable, than yoking a conquered king and an ass to a chariot in a triumphal procession. *The Book of Mormon*, as providing in some degree for popular life, would rightly refuse such marriage.

The Swede's 'fifty stout octavos' may be reduced considerably. The theological part of them might be lopped off, leaving one sentence to explain the whole. He is not at all a mystic, for he knows only too well that he is making but scientific, and, once one has the key, very commonplace puzzle all the time, with his ninefold hierarchies and inspired visions of the planetary worlds and their inhabitants.

His so-called conversion in advanced life must have meant simply the reading for the first time of Jacob Boehme, for there is nothing in the Swede that is not in the other. The prosaic enough vision of a dead moral, at depth, dry intellectual, use, for the vast stores of material science he had gained by his mining, chemistry, and natural philosophy generally, opened to him, and he just took up the old 'magic' thread of the middle ages that

Boehme had been spinning, but with more enthusiasm than Swedenborg knew, because at, during Roman Catholic supremacy, the danger of his life. To any strong intellect there is now no mysticism in either one or other of the men. The morals which Emerson praises blindly enough, from coincidences, correspondences, littles to greats, and greats to littles, are all in 'man the microcosm for nature the macrocosm': no new philosophy. Des Cartes and Malebranche found and popularised, at least as far as students' powers of culture, only part of the middle age philosophy, setting as it were the child against the parent, sometimes a necessity if the latter become tyrannous. *Cogito ergo sum* and 'seeing all things in God' are elementary methods enough to clear sight. By reason of his Hebrew origin Spinoza swept past them easily. Boehme, like him, only in more poetic style, simply took up rabbinical interpretation of the legend of the garden of Eden, and applied it further to the Christian realisation, using what was the science of his time to illustrate his system, the astrology and alchemistry that the religious tyranny of Rome, in other words, the intolerant stage of the mythology of the Christian poetry or Nazarene divine dogmas, forced into unnatural self-obscuring self-protecting shape. The first-class minds of astrology and alchemistry, of whom Paracelsuses and Fausts were not the greatest certainly, knew only too well that there was no popular, aristocratic, or other enlightenment, to which to make appeal, burning being the fate of all Copernican wizards, if the church could have had its way, its logical way; and, in despair, they kept their less cautious blazoning disciples, as much

as they could, toiling with mechanicalities and darknesses of philosophers' stones, elixirs of life, and red crosses. It is peculiar that writers who are thought and think themselves to be learned in these days should talk nonsense about 'mystics like Boehme.' He was the Tyndall of his time, but with more heat of genius; nothing further. Fox, the Quaker, to whom the term mystic is perhaps more applicable, because a less learned thinker, owes his fame in the prophetic way chiefly to the greater sense of reality he had than prevailed in his day. He was a kind of Palissy or Watt in morals. The man ploughed his way to fact through folk-lore, theological and historical mythologies; that was all. Quakerism has a trick yet, with men of head, of getting beyond living truth into the hard dead truth of iron atheism. Those who dwell in passing contemporary forms cannot see such souls as Swedenborg, Boehme, Fox, but as wonders, the truer astonishment being that the millions are imprisoned or, rather, drilled into shape, by mere fickle but indispensable dream. The nemesis of such 'mystics' is that they have more intellect than feeling. The balanced poet is the people's safe guide alone.

Spiritualism or, as its advocates name it now on both sides of the Atlantic, Spiritism, the thing that Moses called having familiar spirits, and draconically, from political sagacity, it may be, punished with death, is neither more nor less than the dead atheism of this wizard of the north. Weaker heads than his cannot hold true to the method throughout, but join the paradise of fools, and get lost, as can be seen. Clever women like Marie, Countess of Caithness, Mrs. Cora Tappan, and others,

who, as being feminine, must have mainly educated themselves to what they know, are particularly open to be led into this blackness of darkness of water theories, star ascensions, dynasties, and ultimately, in spite of their protests, dead nature. Strange it is that the Darwinian Comtists should properly and logically shake hands with the Spiritists; indeed, the latter have, as might be expected, arrived also at their development or evolution theory. The explanation is that the philosophies are fundamentally the same, ending in dilution and the scientist infinitesimal knowledge which becomes duly and really ignorance, often madness. Of them both it can be truly said that like fire they are good servants but bad masters. As dominators their sublimity is of necessity consummately, or, to preserve the likeness, consumedly ridiculous. A Frenchman completely serious is oftenest a curious object, and Comte requiring the world to provide for him, beginning with Grote and Stuart Mill, because he was the glory of the universe, ought to be suggestive in the right way to the shrewdness of a magnanimous, but slightly absurd, because of the supreme attitude of wisdom he assumes, reviewing Morley. To have attempted to check the false heroic madnesses of half-seers was gallant, but to build on equally sandy positivist foundations stultifies that right impulse. But Mrs. Browning in a few words of *Aurora Leigh* has done his best better a thousand times. Read the passage in which she tells what the 'good,' even the 'very good,' not to speak of the 'great,' do and have done for men and women. After dissipating in the periodic converse that goes for literature, what renovation to walk with intel-

ligence beside some of the unhasting unresting masters! The heat and light which give life come around us, and with curious wonder we recognise the marsh lights that flit about the low grounds dreaming that they are suns. Yet there is room and use for the most fitful lights, only let them not be too much trusted, especially as there are genuine stars overhead that will unveil to diligent loving souls. Spiritists or Comtists, let them keep to the moorlands of life; they have no footing by right in the busy haunts of civilisation. To apply their systems to life is a futile, or, if not so, a destructive work. When they meet with the warrior of true armour they go like phantoms before the sun.

It were an easy task indeed for him to lay very flat such a structure as the Swedish Ismeno has piled, and the deluded would recognise the heartlessness of the whole necromancy, very likely not according the honour deserved by the dividing comparing patient scientific bachelor, bachelor, for, with Voltaire witness in his explanation of apocalypses, there is something in this fact also. Goethe's views on woman and on divine shame, are diametrical to those of scientific sense-ruled Boehme, as also to those of monasticism. One-winged birds like the monk Savonarola are not helped by the fact that the wing is of more than normal strength; rather does this make the gyrations of such souls the more dangerous to themselves and their fellows. For all his admiration, Emerson's fine feeling warns him against one who with 'so transcendent a mind' entirely wanted poetry. 'A hoarse voice in a beautiful person is a kind of warning,' and, 'I

think, sometimes, he will not be read longer,' are his doubtful conclusions after all the moral depth he finds.

That in the American atmosphere of thought he did not quite know the meaning of Swedenborg is not wonderful. A star of exactly the opposite heavens from these materialistic glooms, and, as will appear, of pure light, Shakespeare seemed to him a 'profane' person. The puritanic low mist, which has not yet quite cleared off, and in which there are still swathes of the superstition that destroyed women for being witches, by no means for being impostors, as with the Jewish legislator, made him see such a soul so wrongly. In reaching civilisation poor defenceless woman has suffered long and severely enough from Jewish theories of uncleanness. Gross principles of sense, not spirituality, were at the root of most. Nature itself is a mixed glory. The worship of woman has changed all that to man's spiritual elevation, and Spenser should be woman's, as well as the 'poets' poet' for some of this emancipation. To *madonna* she owes most.

Instead of Swedenborg being a great moral teacher, as Emerson doubtfully thought, and as Dawson, away from his good instinct, once lectured, something quite less might be nearer the truth. 'His theological thesis was to make out that Hebrew prophecy or poetry, for they are one thing, whether Jewish, English, or other, was consciously scientific in the same piecemeal everyday way that the making of a ship or any machine by pattern or plan is. The company of which Shakespeare is one know better, for in this kingdom the wind bloweth as it listeth. Knowledge, and design also, only go a certain distance, though when the infinite moves, a great heart is consci-

ously ready to use its impulse. Such alone is it safest to honour as a high one among the heroes: it is infinitely dangerous to fall down and worship the mere levites, who know nothing but the service of routine ritual, expression, verse, external art generally; all the more that they are the readiest to demand your courtesies. An outer stranger altogether to this worship, the seer of angels never breathed within the temple, for all his assertions of heavens and hells. These to him were all and only on this side of the grave, and mere phantoms of mephistophelic necromancy in sense and time.

Assuredly there are more things than were dreamt of in his philosophy; and this is true, though we admit that Bacon and Newton to large if not full extent are of the same circumscribed school, as indeed all strongly analytic minds are in danger of being, and too often permanently. Prodigious Hamilton through the iron bars of his sunless logical prison, discerned this, when he recognised, quite against the bread and butter principles of his and Reid's philosophy of what might be truly called common nonsense, the falsehood in mathematical culture. What the analytic minds have in their darkness laughed at as Newton's weakness, his dealing with *Daniel* and *The Apocalypse*, was the nearest approach of his to the promised land of healthiest human thought. He returned to the dead things, distrusting the sense that is the divinest of gifts, the poetic, which doubles, nay, infinitises, the nature of man. The fame which is not far above notoriety he saved, but he lost his own choicest patrimony as a soul. You may hold your facts so firmly that they will hold you, the famous way of taking Tartars prisoners. Then

you become vermin nailed to the wall of grosser sense, dead, having for a time wide influence of terror, by decay, and perhaps by magnitude, though this only for the witless at all times.

More painful, however, because more pathetic, is it to contemplate the fate of those who are neither of the material nor the spiritual kingdoms, but wander helplessly, now in the one, now in the other, producing hybrid things. Their state has been called imperfect genius; more plainly it might have been named foolish wisdom or wise foolishness. Sad semi-poetic semi-scientific Blake, about whom so many recent tyros, burst balloons, or two stool men in art, have been raving, is but a babe of true poetic blood lost in the dead Swedenborgian atheistic wastes, and the chief note of his monotonous crying is, as might be expected, 'Oh, that there might be no real life with its necessities of habits.' Habits of body and soul are equally his aversion: and by this is marked his equal relationship, first, to the precisians of mere science, who do not sympathise well with the throng of life and its needed spirit of self-sacrifice, children and wives becoming inconveniences to their wrongly refined but deadly senses; second, to the incoherent untrained lyric sensual souls of the least honourable level of poetry. The garden of Eden of Moses is quite diametrical in one respect to Blake's: the former had it in its natural place at the beginning of life, before the fall from the absolute to the relative, from the complete to the imperfect, from the unconscious to the perceptive; but the latter, like all the Swedenborgians and limited lyrists, would have it here and now, the erotists and the philosophers of matter at one on this

the worst doctrine that poor humanity could suffer from. At birth, and at the end of life, which is birth of transformation into other being, nakedness is appropriate; and to all the high visions of men and nations, paradises, no matter for actuality of pain, correspond to these periods: but for beautiful and true life on earth, clothing, material and spiritual, with its ever changing moral grading, from uncleanness to cleanness, and *vice versa*, is the prime and continual essential. We are not angels, and virgin souls are few indeed. The sole charm of this nearly typical 'blind leader of the blind' lies in the pitifulness and sincerity of his cries. The metallic rusts, suggestive enough of sulphuric regions, by which he fixed what broken visions he had of truth, have a raucous call to the truly artistic ears. They are quite of the nature of screams, and should sufficiently tell whence they came. His art, if art it may be called, is, except for the barbarians of society, in the main, dead sensational devilish as Doré's, and too much of Hugo's, and for like reason, the cultivation of the spiritually nude, of the garish, of the transpontine, of the monstrous. Shakerism and monasticism have one origin, the suicidal desire after impersonality, the whitest of devils. The strange whims about painters and poets are completely explained by Blake's position. Rembrandt's modest awe and mystery did not suit Adamitism, and Turner would have been, to this same spirit, Antichrist, Beelzebub; the definition for which he would risk his soul being induced partly by Boehmean, renaissance, and Swedenborgian pseudo-science, partly by the teachings of the lyric feeling whose pre-Raphaelitic idolatry must have, and rightly for it, mechanical finish as

first quality. The greater souls in the kingdom of art know that this kind of precision is only of the lowest heaven, and that there are far severer tasks before the highest mastery is reached. Genuine passion will have shape. To be lost in the glory of a subject is to be saved! Even the conventional moral test happens to be useful in judging Blake, though often it is but the stupidest of guides. The infinite morality, when we prophetically reach it, is the genuine absolute test of all art; but seldom indeed is this oracle either invoked or heard in these or any days. He is a Jonah prophet, self-willed, not a little selfish, grumbling too much about his gourd of a day and night, deserving to be lost and found through leviathan, not particularly pleased if men should find beauty or salvation or life otherwise than his way, as if he knew better man and Nineveh's case than the great maker. He is a prophet, nevertheless, but distinctly a minor one.

Goethe, in his famous *Hamlet* critique, is only intensely descriptive; but it is very much more than probable that he knew a great deal he has not told, reserving certain things for wise personal contemporary reasons. He has said, however, that Shakespeare is not of the theatre, which is wonderfully suggestive as coming from him, whose own chief energies have been caught, fortunately or unfortunately, by it, though, unlike the other, he had freedom of choice. There are a thousand indications that his enthusiastic study of the inmost art of the master, of whom he proudly but cautiously confessed himself the pupil, had the best of all rewards, the power of free composition on his own account; though at one young period the greatness was destructive of all effort, as is

often the case. The father of German literature has been by wise thinkers found in this green island of the sea, and every acute enough reader of Goethe can feel the sonship flowing through his works with a generous and not on his own part always or sufficiently unrecognised power. What is to be got as to his full opinions is only to be caught by side light; rather is he inclined to hide than to disclose even that which he is sure of. But there are, certain things being discovered, whole provinces of knowledge attainable in this manner. Meantime, nevertheless, it has to be said that nothing or next to nothing is directly or at all given by him to readers who will not wrestle with him for his own secrets. For them who do the all may be found. It will appear incidentally that the celebrated Talleyrand-like rather external if not purposely superficial discussions in *Wilhelm Meister*, were far from his inmost last thoughts. His confessions to Eckerman as to Shakespearean influence on English and German thought must not perhaps count, for he was then out of poetic vigour.

The Schlegels are hampered by the popular form of exposition through lectures, and also, no matter if they were not by any means strangers to writing verse, especially translation verse, which is of blinding nature, by the want of artistic real acquaintance with the genuine original constructive matter of poetry. The man, not being an artist in a parallel art either, who has never touched the real stone with tool, has not sufficient data by which to judge sculpture; but true it is, on the other hand, that much acquaintance with actual chiselling is very likely to lead him, should he require to be critic,

out of correspondence with the popular audience waiting his instruction. There is good ordinary suggestion to be got from the able brothers, but they have entered only, not wrought, where the interest and expectation are highest. The deeper Friedrich has recognised, in a sketchy way, a higher element than dramatic; and not, as with Augustus, in the merely historical matter.

Lastly, of these, the greater critics, Hugo has not the strong sober intellect to master and shape his own wonderderful semi-lightning semi-firework gleams of high truth about the powerful mild-brained Englishman, though he knows his position as one in the first rank, having the intuitive testimony that admits no questioning, of his brotherhood with Daniels, Ezekiels, Isaiahs, Johns, Homers, Virgils, Dantes, and the other worldwide hearts.

CHAPTER III.

WANDERERS.

Of the findings of less recognised genius none have at all been within sight of Heraud, for all his fuss, absurdity, and vagueness. His book on the inner life of Shakespeare is one of the best approaches to recognising the poet, though it is far from fixing what the work of Shakespeare is. In the details, the critic fails to see what the poet is doing, but he has noticed some outlines that are true. The trick of 'the oracle' he has learnt from Coleridge, whose disciple he was, and he practises it in that ridiculous too sufficient way that shows talent aping genius, the upper scholar the master, in this case an imperfect master. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* he is only at the door, but so far as he can go he has glimpses of right perception. It is refreshing, although clearly another's blind attempts are being followed, to have some acuteness and sense, if of very peculiarly spotted almost absurd kind, in so high a position. Flickering indeed is the character of the light, yet there is some. Being himself a kind of torso poet, with the head more complete than the other parts, he fails in shapely vigour, and not in right search after the facts.

What Ulrici has said deserves attention also, for he

has stated general and some particular truth better than most regarding the spirit and meaning of the plays; indeed, in direct exposition of what he considers the poet's method of construction, he has reached farther than any except Heraud, whose thin guesses are true so far as they go. While his aesthetic perception is very pleasant to meet with, where so much is dull and dark, he has lost the best truths, as the purely critical spirit is apt to do, by his delusion that Shakespeare in his chief works was illustrating Christian ethics. This is as if a general should choose to do the sergeant's duties in preference to his own.

Birch has inquired into the philosophy and religion of the poet with exactly an opposite result. His careful detailed thesis goes to prove the Elizabethan one of the same temper as Voltaire, Diderot, as Byron in his wild half-sincere because ignorant infidelities, or as Goethe in his hardest moods. The censurer of mankind, as in *Hamlet*; the blasphemer, one who believed that death is the end to man and beast alike; an irreverent mocker at all moral laws which society has struggled to the death for: it is thus Ulrici's apologist for Christianity appeared to one very evidently a sincere and able man, and who lived in the actual Christian faith and practice.

It cannot be denied that pessimistic Birch is on quite as firm ground as optimistic Ulrici; in fact, he has the controversial advantage of the text to point to, whereas his exact counterpart, because both are partial and limited thinkers, has mainly theorising for his trust. Ulrici would make him a commonplace everyday pulpiteering king; Birch says he is Beelzebub, the prince of devils:

and, from their points of view, they are each sincere and entirely right.

Such are the two attitudes which always in the world's history the simple loving but fickle because comparatively popular hearts, on the one hand, take towards absolutely new saving thought and its thinker; as, on the other, do the conservative formalist stereotyped, let it be said scientifically, pharisaic hearts. What Matthew Arnold, inspired by Emerson's short glimpses, as both of them are Goethean debtors, has all his life been aiming to say, and could not, for all his attempts to put on the Weimar cloak, is simply that the genuine speech of the most poetic hearts is the sole best gospel for man. Χιλὸσ ψυχῶν ῥῆμα θεῖον. Best-self of the state or time-spirit of the world are vanity of vanities when the original man speaks. It is then unlimited not-self and eternity; and the usual terrors and accusations and limited awkward ill-placed praises surround the appearance of a divine soul. Perhaps 'Fritz Fritzart' who wrote *War Shakspeare ein Christ?* was reverent rather, as the world might say, to too great depth, than blasphemous. The only immortal absolute substance that man has known is the poetic reality, the source of all life. The essential symbolism of it with all nations is, first, for personal salvation, libations or baptism, representing all purity of body and soul; second, feasts or eucharists, representing love, from that of the two, to the society, to the infinite. On this ground alone can the poet create a new mythology in which the weaker souls may have delight and live, he himself the genuine absolute god-man alone able, and he only for moments of divine extasis, to bear the great

union which is life and eternal substance. Through symbols he opens direct paths for all the weaker ones to the bosom of the infinite. His own joy is to rise and dwell where conscious sight is of all things. Religions and arts in their realised condition are accidents, not essentials, Buckle's rather sprawling intellect has noted; poetry is the source of them, not they of poetry.

As introductory matter to further study little can be found better than Ulrici, though the danger that his treatment may seem exhaustive would almost forbid him to be read at all. If such as Birch be also read a strong mind may find truth higher than either.

Though Gervinus deserves every credit for his very judicial survey of the whole Shakespearean field, to the extent of the plan he laid out for himself, he has nothing new to tell. Following up, professedly, the lead of Goethe and Ulrici, he has amplified widely and well; but to one who wishes to know more than learned flowing disquisition, to one who as artist or student is eager to see the mind of Shakespeare at work, he gives very little, and *that* loosely. The best value of his *Commentaries* is that he vindicates the Ulrici method to good extent. His estimate, also, of Goethe, and of Goethe's own knowledge of Shakespeare as his superior, is finely critical.

If the traveller be not a craven, the horse's fiery neck can show him through the river; and there is one book that, very much in this way, deserves attention. It is written by an American lady, evidently rejoicing in the name of Bacon. An introductory essay by Nathaniel Hawthorne is not the least curious portion of the volume. The cunning but not very masculine novelist plays his

opening tune in the strangest way, as if he felt the person he was introducing might be, after all, possessed with a devil, or be first cousin to a faun, at any rate, hardly be quite safe for either himself or the public to know fully. Her theory, though propounded in the most barbaric Red-Indian English that admiration and hysteric feminine sympathy could well reach, is one of the best, or at all events one of the most suggestive, there have been. Sir Walter Raleigh is her hero, and the feminine in her, according to the traditional generosity in all times and in all places, makes him therefore the founder of all the virtues, prosaic and poetic, of the Elizabethan period. The lady, what is more to the purpose, recognises fully the political necessity, during that age, of secret meanings and universal cipher; and she boldly follows the passing of them into the literature of the time. There is not a little likelihood in her idea that there was under Elizabeth's, for long as to this matter not clearly conscious, eyes, a secret school of thinkers which resulted ultimately in Cromwell and the American republic. That Raleigh, however, was the political and historical chief figure, Bacon the philosophic and scientific, and Shakespeare the poetical, of such a knot, requires fact or faith to some large extent. It is possible that the hidden meanings explain the necessity of the fact that the plays were left unpublished. Their writer, if not actual author, who could not but know well their value, was associated, though only a player, with the greatest men of the time; and their lives *may* have been in each other's keeping. Few have made a satisfactory guess as to why the conspirator Brutus is canonised as he is in *Julius Cæsar*,

above ancient degree entirely; and this lady's republican supposition is at least explanatory. Furnivall believes Brutus to be the most English of all Shakespeare's characters, and unlike the traditional one, but his criticisms are spotted and prosaic when not ignorant. There may have been the strongest reasons why the poet's life and displays were as quiet as he could make them. They were all wise men above their time, and they were wise enough to know it, though gallant Raleigh by Stuart ban did not escape the reformer's general fate. The wisdom of such men condensed considerably before it became the too sharp puritanic sword. There is much to be got from Delia Bacon, if her views go all too wide. It is very likely she did not read the cosmology of her hero's *History of the World*, though Matthew Arnold's laugh at it may not be of the right quality. Philo Judæus was a shrewd thinker, and he also has odd physical fancies, very good to open the eyes of all-wise scientism, even though that of 'culture,' its newest phase, of which deep hearts like the light only a little better than the sweetness. Her idea seems to be that Shakespeare was to Raleigh, Bacon, and some other first spirits, what Pope possibly was to Bolingbroke, Warburton, and others, the cunning popular shaper into verse of doctrines that could not be risked to prose, and its calm perusal, except at expense of heads in the Tudor period, and of benefices and benefits in the Stuart and Guelph. This political aspect of the subject is interesting, and it may be important; but it is subordinate to finding the continual permanent value of the poet's work, so that it may be known what he is as an artist. Political questions are apt to lead one to a side door where he

enters and is lost. The universal politic, not the special, is the province for clear sight to have its proper objects.

Holmes has confessedly followed up her lead by actually trying to identify 'Shakespeare' with Bacon, and as a piece of advocacy it is skilful, especially the quotation of parallel passages and the recognition of the philosopher's special knowledge of mythicism; but with Spedding's opinion, that the same kind of reasoning might disprove the authorship by Dickens of *Oliver Twist*, most minds would agree. That Smith, who is the English representative of this theory, as Holmes is the American, persuaded Palmerston to believe that Bacon was the coryphæus of poets that has kept the world so much in admiration since, is not of much consequence in literary matters, political minds not being remarkable for perception in this kind. But Holmes's book is of some general importance, because it leads to the proof, by its demand of complete culture in ancient and modern knowledge for the writer of plays such as these, that not only the experience of one but of many minds, in a highly intellectual period of world history, is embodied in so many-sided practical as well as theoretic experience, didactism, and discussion. For example, as a very special instance, Ophelia a *felo de se*, argued by the grave-diggers, taken with professional skill from a celebrated case, Plowden *versus* some one else, does not point to Bacon, but it is one of many facts pointing to partnerships of a much more likely and ordinary character. The Edinburgh anonymous critic who in 1852 began these Bacon theories, by a magazine article of *Chambers's Journal* trying to prove that Shakespeare must have 'kept a poet,' is perhaps best

entitled to the credit of indirectly showing in so curious a manner that the mythic dramatist is an entirely different reality from the sweet Spenserian thinker and cunning singer of *The Sonnets*, *The Dream*, and *The Tempest* who was the actual Shakespeare.

Of other Americans, Hudson has capital ideas as to the true meaning of poetic art, though he does not catch their genuine application to his work whom he so wisely and earnestly admires. White's *mot* that some handsome lady had been found with the lost arms of the *Venus de Melos* in her possession, gives him a better chance of immortality than his Shakespearean acumen. Perhaps he will yet find for us the lost tales of Miletus.

Guizot and Lamartine have nothing to say that is of much consequence in this field, but it might have been otherwise, especially with the latter.

The somewhat spirited, if quite unsuccessful, attempt of Dowden to get within the mind and art of Shakespeare, though 'awfully popular,' is of real indirect value, the part of his work that he makes apology for needing it least. He is afraid to trust his opinions, for too much opinions and not findings they are, against an actual or supposed thick-headed wisdom, that must take the poet as he is, without refining, forsooth! As if refining and ingenuity upon ingenuity, the last ingenuity being the perfect finish that hides all ingenuity to every gaze but his who stands in the same sphere, were not the very excellence and crown of the artist. Let the dull take what sense they can find, but let them not measure others' power of vision by theirs. That there are inner structures on which the writer wrought, he has a shadowy idea, as

playing with such a theory as this exemplifies, that in *The Tempest* Shakespeare in the person of Prospero perhaps meant to give his farewell to the stage, that Ferdinand was probably Fletcher, and so on. Like Hotspur, Dowden apprehends a world of figures of this kind, not the forms of what he should expect; but such a worker as he is criticising shaped from quite other motives than these: a subject to its depths, in the immortal regions where time and space are passed, was the joy of his soul; not personal sentimentalities of the passing moment. That this guessing is not made seriously explains why, on the road to real knowledge, he is stopped, and can only give us amateurish doubtful hints as to either the mind or art he has earnestly, but by no means earnestly enough, tried to study. Possibly he was mainly deterred from following where he might have got proper light by the high fantastic foreign, especially German, attempts, that are manifestly enough foolish and ridiculous, to find all kind of things in some such path. But the scholar has quite other powers around him to keep him from wandering, when dealing with writing in his own language, from those any foreigner has. He who knows what poetry is when deepest, widest, clearest, most musical, and most suggestive, easily refuses to one born to another tongue the last sufficient power of appreciating, and the fullest liberty of saying what is really and ultimately within our best classics, just as with complete wisdom, and perfect tolerance, we deny to actors of alien speech the power of interpreting to the most artistic degree of excellence our drama; refusals equally applicable to English attempts at supposed masteries in

other languages. These things are acknowledged by all in the matter of translations. Dante has this: 'Everyone should know that nothing harmonised by musical enchainment can be transmuted from one tongue into another without breaking all its sweetness and harmony.' The same principle underlies the different cases. It is not denied that translations have a valuable use in giving a rough idea of the matter, but it is certain that beyond this their dignity does not extend. If the thought is of the highest value, the musical enchainment is of next, and when the latter is destroyed, the artist is seen disrobed into prose, a valuable but the crude implastic less shapely state of expression. The translation or copy of a picture, statue, or musical composition, the work of a great master, is of similar imperfection. The flowing soul-melody, the heart-music, the personal union to the infinite, which was the source of the piece of art, is lost. A like barrier is between one who tries to criticise a book in a foreign language, especially if it is harmonised thought. It may get thinner, but never will disappear, no, not to genius. This does not at all mean that a dull English mind, dealing with one of our best writers, is equal to a foreign brilliant spirit dealing with the same. The position is that if the genius of the English critic is equal to the other's, he has on his side a whole world of advantage towards finding the truth. It is chiefly in this light that it is regrettable that Dowden has not been able or willing to move boldly where he has entered. His curiously mixed opinions, so near the truth and yet so far from it, about Kreyssig, Gervinus, and especially Ulrici, are a

study as to incomplete strength, probably of the chronic kind.

Elze has gone in his essays nearly as far as it is wise for a foreign critic to go in criticism of Shakespeare. One of his best ideas is that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a masque, and he has valuable external hints as to *The Tempest*, agreeing that it must have been about if not the last in order. His repudiation of Hugo's book on the poet, and of some good French criticism since the Franco-German war, shows how mixed the thoughts, by accidents, can become in this kind of work, to clear as well as dull headed men.

Of the philistine division of our own critics let the author of *The Characteristics of English Poets from Chaucer to Shirley* stand for average example. He has all the bluster and seeming strength of liberalism, and says weighty expository things of the boasted common sense type. No better antidote to merely dreamy thinking than reading him, but at the same time it is criticism for sayers only, not of any use for doers of the plastic type. He is a man of action in a field where passion plays at least an equal part, and in his present mood and garments the poetic spirits never will impart their secrets to him. The valley of humiliation is before him if he is ever to be a true pilgrim and ultimately of the artistic paradise.

In his surveys of the English drama Ward has so well treated the chief details of Shakespearean criticism up to the present time in the various countries, that he deserves every mere student's warm thanks: but he has nothing very essential of his own to give; and what

thoughts of others seem to have his approval are of the professorial and philistine type rather than the seeing. He appears to have faith that 'division of labour' such as societies indulge in, and mechanical toil of counting rhymes and weak endings, are really useful in the world of art. This condition of mind of itself would keep him out of the choice circle of original critics. Mercantile production is quite other thing than that of the artists. What is work for the plain understanding he, however, deals well and strongly with. The facts, if not as numerous and full as there are materials for, are well chosen and well arranged; and possibly his book is the more effective and valuable to a certain class of readers because of its speed of foot. Those who need to know the bare outlines of what has been done and is doing with regard to Shakespeare cannot have, for some time, better guidance. To hold him as an authority would be, not wise, if one felt keenly enough. It is certainly possible that to the end he could be master to many, for the thumb nail can hide half the sky if near enough to the eye, or, as some one has said, a wall is as good as infinite to you if you cannot see over it. Yet this critic is no unwise one; he is exceptionally wise in 'practical' matters, for the distance he does survey.

If Mrs. Montagu's fine essay, as to, in particular, the rich field of spiritual suggestion and folk lore the Gothic history gave to the poet, making more powerful motive than Greek or ancient artists ever knew, be added, we have got the best that has been yet done in the search after him. It is pleasant to find a lady's sympathy so well supported by clear thought. Her general comparison

between Greek, Latin, French, and English drama is quite above what is to be got among the Shakespearean scholars usually. So far as she could go, guided a good deal by the older French critics of poetry, Madame Dacier in particular, she is right, as to where the poet wrought. In her chapter on the preternatural beings she stands at the door of his workshop, yet she has not entered. The materials he wrought with she has reported of very wisely, but she has not seen him, as Ruskin puts it, intellectually 'stripped' at his joyful work. With Charles Wordsworth, anyone may safely call Mrs. Montagu's a celebrated essay. Though only a few steps in the right direction, they are so sympathetic, intuitional, calm, and womanlike in their practical wisdom, that the dark air of dusty criticism seems by her little book shafted with a steady beam of sunshine. Ladies, witness also Mrs. Jameson on the women of Shakespeare and Madame de Staël's admiring books, have been peculiarly successful in this, the most difficult field of English poetic art; but though their sympathy has kept them right as far as they have gone, it needs much stronger power than the feminine to see order of the fullest kind constructed by a master masculine mind. Of the audience critics, so to speak, they are the first in many respects; to the artistic spirits, whether the makers or true seers, behind the curtain of the displaying, they are charming and charmed children. It is not yet understood that those who call for enjoying the poets simply as they find them are right so far as they are concerned themselves, and they are the great mass, but that also those who see the beauty of this popular approach, which is of infinite and direct value, see also

another inner world of beauty. The musical audience have one pleasure; the artists have that, and their own special one.

What Masson has said in a short essay on Shakespeare and Goethe is as good and valuable as anything in passing literature, his views of *The Sonnets* being altogether above the ordinary critical perception. His knowledge of what was Shakespeare's was then limited, and he was too fresh from Ulrici, but his paper is capital so far. To leave these feelers after the genuine light, Wiseman's oration, of popular addresses on the subject, is easily the first. The general drift of the poet's genius is displayed with the peculiar cosmopolitan power, freedom, and grace, of learned catholicism.

Heine stands, much as his admirer Matthew Arnold does, both of them sardonic smilers, knowing little of the royal cheerfulness which Goethe and Emerson have fixed as the distinctive characteristic of the true lover of beauty, the poet, in that zone between talent and genius which receives so much and too much attention. He is a kind of mosstrooper on the borders of Israel and Philistia, and he shows as often the peculiarities of the uncircumcised as of their opponents. That he nicknames well is only to be expected from the advantage of his position. It is impossible to trust what one gets from him when it is most dazzlingly like the true diamond. Possibly his placing of Cervantes as the greatest epicist, Shakespeare as the greatest dramatist, and Goethe as the greatest lyrist, be it noted he himself of this last ilk, may be strong thinking. Scott the second English poet, the poetry it must be noticed being that of the novels, is a judgment

that seems to measure him well enough; but Arnold would hardly seem to be of the same mind on this point, since he has very happily called Scott's highest effort in poetry 'bastard epic,' which it exactly is. It was a favourite French delusion, caused by the incapacity of the language for deepest musical feeling, through its talkativeness, rhetoric ease, and consequent want of shade, that poetry needed no measure or regular rhythm for its existence, Chenier and Guerin's attitude things being arrivals of this kind. The truest vision will not come but musically, Carlyle very nearly says, and certainly means, as his own weakness in music taught him indirectly. We have had Shelley and Wordsworth proving in essays the prosy heresy, their inspired practice drawing the opposite conclusion. Heine was an *ignis fatuus* to himself as to others, and hung over the bogs of life with similar variation of brilliant flickering. He seems to have had for his private comfort a somewhat different estimate of himself. At the general bonfire of a worthless universe, he was a specially ingenious and many coloured firework, whose gyrations and peculiarities it was of the last importance, if such an idea as importance remained, to watch carefully and shoutingly. The universe is not built on this philosophy, on whatever other, *that* is sure. Without a notion of purism, it may be said that cursing and swearing, from the plainest up to the height of refinement, helped him, as much as power of arm, to what front he did reach. One has deep sympathy for a son of imagination wandering wilfully and quite lost in the night, but it were worse than foolishness, if that is possible, to seek much guidance from his gloomy torch. If he prophesies

at all, it is after the method of Balaam, the half-inspired and the half-demoniac. That he has a lesson of form, and other lessons besides, to some, is true, but it will not be good for healthy minds to dwell in the sphere of his rather lime light transfiguration. Of Shakespeare he knows about as much as he did of England, which he discovered to its physical and mental depths in a few days of London fog, some minutes in Cheapside being especially transcendent in productive vision, though they might as well have been passed near the Bourse columns, so far as English characteristics are concerned. If he was a spoiled Parisian child, his Hebraism and Germanism dying with the new Gallic experience, as we see Englishmen becoming in Ireland ultra-Irish, his strangely mixed blood seeming attractive rather than otherwise to Hugo's 'lamp of civilisation,' lit with other oil than that of unctuous methodic grace, yet, for moments, when depth and insight are less sought than fancy, quaintness, beautiful skittishness, he is of special value. But let his reader be sure of the power of returning from the cave of his incantations. For present purpose it is valuable to note that he does not find his countryman Goethe either epic or dramatic, but, at his best, lyric; and with regard to the lyric, his judgment, if in respect to that alone, is the most deserving of attention, the strings of the lyre being what he knew best.

A perfect example of the *pur sang* philistian from which the sardonists are suspiciously anxious to wash their hands, is that of a Canadian professor of the prevailing popular science school of thought. From the ridiculous Darwinian hypothetic philosophy, mainly the fruit of the rhetorical cagliostric Faust-quackish *Vestiges*

of Creation, and of the nascent geological antiquities of the century, a philosophy even in its most ingenious most pedantically mechanical development by Spencer and a new horde of dull persisting Germans, that is so unoriginal, cheap, and the rest, he has discovered Caliban to be some sort of corporeal missing link, most likely the very transmutation of species that they all have been on their paws for so long, to keep them from becoming the sport of creation, not a genuine thought in the critic's head as to the spirituality of all poetic personification. He is only one of the many 'dumb mouths;' and their libraries of volumes, the result of waste searching, are but phantomic, plutonic. True, they see with material eyes, but the corresponding spiritual sense is not theirs, by gift, or by that culture which they think the highest, whilst it is only, if the necessary, also the beggarly mouth-fed elementary.

To take arms against the sea of dark critics, whom no doubt nature turns to use, though of little force, would be to fight the slain. If few of them have been left unexamined, typical ones can only be discussed. While, therefore, shunning description of the dead armies that fill this valley of dry bones, never, it is to be hoped, to become a live vale of Jehoshaphat, or rather, in that condition, of Tophet, unless a soul also is there to rule them, there may be got in small, if it is desired, as good an idea of the kind of thing written by most of these martyrs by mistake from the essays of Goldsmith on poetry and *belles lettres* as may be necessary. If they are not sufficient, De Quincey's amazingly eulogistic paper can be added as an exhibition of brilliant obtuseness all but supreme; and

justice does not forbid to say so without special tenderness, the quality of mercy in like case not being his own saving grace. The Irishman, however, should be a shock of the required intensity. In the sixteenth essay he discusses the absurdities, as he thinks them, of Hamlet's soliloquy, in a way that might make one blush to permanent pain for the thought of human culture and fame. To charitably guess that he is shamming would be shirking the glaring fact that he is evidently sincere. It is valuable as a genuine specimen of the dealing, at all periods, of secondary, merely popular, and necessarily diffuse ability, with the products of an original mind in loving correspondence with the full heart of nature. Johnson, whose almost brutal criticisms of poetry are similarly of the surface, and this his contemporary, with whom may also be bracketed Addison and others of that, making some exceptions like Swift, Warburton, and Pope if he was original, sapless, somewhat gay, and somewhat shapely, but superficial time, may have credit, and justly, for adorning some things; as to the highest poetic work they were absolutely blind. However wise they may seem to those who have not at all, or yet, the gift and culture to stand above them, they are in reality only of the class who get thought at second or third hand. Their praise is with the many, and deservedly, since they, and such as they, are the ordinary ministering or serving priests, with whom communion is frequently easier than with the hierarchs: but, alas, they need much watching, if it were only to be had; for they are apt to make sad work of the messages they get from those who have been in the inner shrine of truth. Dryden, a 'glorious' John, with

the intellectual calibre of a country *ore rotundo* rector, improving *The Tempest*, giving a sister to Miranda, with other similarly polite amendments, or re-writing *Paradise Lost* for the Annian age, as if it were possible for anyone to meddle profitably with a true work of art, except its author, ought to be a beacon of the reddest glare. John Dennis, the critic, by no means the smallest figure of that period, despite *The Dunciad*, showing how little Shakespeare knew of the poetical art, because he allowed innocent Desdemona to be killed, Hamlet to die, Cæsar to play a less prominent part than Brutus, the dignities, and especially the justices, being forgotten, that is, the poetical justices of his urban cockaigne *bourgeoisie* brain, as all-sufficient substitutes for those of providence, is another of the literary wonders of the absurd kind. Like Dryden with *The Tempest*, he had the blundering stupidity to correct *Coriolanus* so as to bring out to perfection all the small moralities according to the dictates of his magnanimous mind. Flies on the wheel do make a dust, it would seem, and Dennis was a bluebottle to the gnats or midges most of them were and are. Yet there is a ground of apology for his blind attempts at measuring thus. Granted that modern real, or, what is suggestively enough called, domestic drama, is the sole legitimate drama, and perhaps the poetical justices of Dennis are the logical necessities of the case. Mild-mouthed Talfourd neither deals satisfactorily with Dennis nor with the greatly absurd Rymer, Macaulay's *bête noire*, who abuses Shakespeare to so amusing a degree; there is more to be got from them, some way or other, than he could guess. When, however, there is the least rise into religious drama,

as whither, consciously or not, Shakespeare's inclinations always led, inscrutabilities, nay, impossibilities, and absolute contradiction of human justices, are the powers of that supernatural as well as natural domain. It was thus Æschylus got his best inspirations of awe and horror. Whether Shakespeare's, or rather the Elizabethan, mixture of the realistic drama of the everyday understanding and moralities, and single intention, with the religious supernatural imaginative drama of mysterious awes and infinite moralities, was either confusion or eclectic art, is an alternative which, if decided one way or other, will make Dennis in the first case a capital critic only of the ordinary playwright, in the other an ignorant man trying to teach. It is certainly doubtful whether contrast of high to vulgar scenes like the *Hamlet* grave-diggers, consecrates the latter into art. A popular trick it looks rather than clear skill. Its abuse in pictorial art is well known. The comic beside the sorrowful always catches common eyes, but is it truly pathetic? Spurgeonic anecdote suits not much culture. At all events, should quips appear in the very solemn scenes? Of all such minds of the Anne and early George period none have translated an accidental word of the deepest meaning in the work of England's sunniest, most melancholy, the strongest being strong in all directions, sincerest, wisest man. The jungles and wastes of their irrelevant thought are not to be revelled in, but quickly passed through, as destructive rather than helpful to skilful insight. For the Victorian or some future age his figure awaits unveiling.

CHAPTER IV.

ORDER OF POETIC THOUGHT.

THE mass of Shakespeare's work is done in the middle or dramatic province of poetry; and so long as anyone confines himself to that, it is absolutely true that he cannot possibly be the poet of the highest arrival.

A writer some years ago influential at the court of the newspaper that holds the journalistic sovereignty, and then famous for his knowledge of criticism, which he, imitating the Provençal phrase with regard to poetry, called on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle the gay science, has, consistently enough with this, nearly reversed the order of fact as to the dignities of literary effort. His half sight of a whole truth as to harmonic unconsciousness has led him into the most peculiar places. He almost, for in this he is not *à propos*, seems to see the world of art as if he walked on his head; yet he was very near becoming more than ephemeral authority, higher men as well as the dismal commentators pricking up ears of recognition. Shairp, without a tone of the poetic in his own verse, in his prosy essays on poetry holds him as far more than something. Prospero's epilogue not well understood, and Hamilton's philosophy of pleasure, account for this now wide-spread delusion that poetry ought to be all pleasure. Logically it may be proved,

as sophistic physical philosophers prove that if you grant there is heat there can be no cold, or *vice versa*. All the same, there *are* heat and cold; there *is* poetry of pain, the intensest, as well as of pleasure. The Greek sculptor straightened the lower eyelid of his most joyous goddesses to keep present the thought of tears. *Mutatis mutandis*, the arguments for pleasure as sole end of poetry are good for pain as the sole same; the truth being that here also man is sympathetical contrast. The middle of life's stream is deepest and safest for navigation.

That the dramatic is not the highest sphere, the dictum of Aristotle the philistine of philistines nevertheless, could be shown elaborately and incontestably. For immediate purpose two or three sentences will make the position sufficiently strong. The true sound intellect of man, having the purified heart ever as its inseparable companion, is the crowning faculty or attitude, the nearest approach to pure spirit; the understanding, with its hasty necessary practice-resolves, is the intermediate power or state of our nature; and the instinctive heart of humanity, with its blind affections, its brave and timid passions, is the lowest chamber of our wonderful being, because there the other creatures and we have our nearest approach. Framing to the harp ditties lovely well, and giving the tongue a helpful ornament; this is humble but true art: though the higher greater makers are apt, and sometimes with reason, when they look down, to wish rather to be kittens and cry mew than be of these same metre ballad-mongers. But there is truth in the saying that a people's songs are guidance more than laws; and the goods should credit their bringers, to at least just

extent. Neither Homer nor Sophocles would expel from their 'republics' all the singers who are willing themselves, and charm others as well as they know, to make room for the uncles. The epic, which has its last height in the divine lyricism of the universal consciousness of a never-ceasing ever-flowing ego or person, is the perfect world of the intellect which love has strengthened to its full powers; the drama, whether secular or religious, if the distinction can be drawn, which deals with the actual course and accidents of life as it must or may exist in society or association, is the expression and guide to the understanding to teach it manners, beautiful ways for expected and unexpected occasions, reverence to some extent for possibilities of terror or joy it is apt never to dream of if left to its own mechanicality; and the lyric is the humble but sweet instrument which gives relief to the shapeless delights and sorrows of the least articulate and most animal emotions of the soul.

It is true that the epical, the dramatic, and lyric aspects are all more or less in every poetic sentence, not to say piece; but this is the way with all divisions for convenience of thinking. Homer's or any other true epic may be looked upon as the lyric of the universal soul of the general man, or as the drama of social historical man. A lyric can be viewed as the epic of the universal feelings of an individual, or as the drama of the emotions in extreme action in an intense soul. The drama can be seen as society's lyrical national expression of its joys and sorrows, or as an epic which brings down the divine justices to soothe human struggle in a world of injustice and imperfect or undeserved joys and sorrows. With all

writers of great force there is continual passing from one sphere to the other. It is so much so that distinctions seem directive rather than aught else. Shakespeare, with epic poetic instinct, rises often above the dramatic justices; and the fact that fuller expression of his soul is thereby arrived at, justifies his invasions of merely useful boundaries. Could one restrain to these real if flowing distinctions, no doubt his art by itself would be more perfect, but better have imperfect arrivals than none, which teachings as to flexible unities are apt to cause. The loose discussions about form and expression have their origin in this subtle region of thought. Elizabethan poetic art owes its didactic vigour, if crudeness also, greatly to the fact that the philosophy of making beautiful things for the soul's delight was dimmer than, for example, it was to the Greeks, to Dante and the Italian artists generally, as well as to some others ancient and modern. The epic is the lyric to a greatest soul, the song of the universe; the epic is a drama to him when he recognises the interaction of beings. It is for analytic purpose to help the weaker sight that it must be useful to draw the lines that the epic has worldwide relations, the drama society relations, and the lyric individual feeling, as characteristics.

With a power and skill unrecognised only because of their inhuman alpine want of atmosphere, Yendys has divided all poetry into lyric and epic, the drama being to him only a more conditioned epic. Such a dichotomy is not suited to the moral world, even if it were sufficiently demonstrable. The threefold aspect is the easier, the more generally helpful, and therefore the more to be used. This

poet gets lost in the system maker or mere man of analytic science. At the same time, his depth of feeling has kept him wonderfully accurate. No mere philosopher could recognise the parallelism between the rhythm of the microcosm man in his best works and himself even to the beating of the heart, and the eternal energy of the macrocosm, the universe. But Yendys has not, though ever so much nearer than the men of head alone, caught the proteus. His own nemesis as a poet was just the over estimation of bare knowledge as meaning power, the mistake of all the Fausts, Paracelsuses, Festuses, and roaring geniuses. By storm and stress we shall not take the kingdoms of high influence. Young philosophy rather than poetry is responsible for the frequent attempts, though some stiffen, alas, for ever, in this inane region of dead frost and fancied power. They see *over* the valleys, and they do *not* see human life!

The hard and fast cold system mongers forget the thousandfold interweaving flow of all harmonic genuine thought; and they dream they have fixed the living spirit of life; but they are ever left with the dry bones, though such as Hobbes, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, or Schopenhauer be the toilers. A mechanicalist would put one's thoughts very quickly into *his* shape, no doubt. A system is always a kind of cowardice, an attempt to shield or veil the weakness of the head and heart from the great presence. We may find the order of precedence or rank, but this is only temptation to the formalists and dry hearts to fix everything mechanically and inflexibly. It is not nature's easy omnipotent flowing method; and the poet alone can be the master to arrange her ceremonies for the noblest

life, for he knows that if she is passionate in her love for law the law is not that of the single calculating mind however strong. Even he himself rises into the sublime unity of will with the universal mind only at intervals. If the heights of the epic or dramatic may have a lyric aspect also, he still knows that the great grading is preserved; if the simplest lyric may have an epic tone, that does not affect the true order. A queen in certain circumstances may tend the beggar and lose no dignity, and Diogenes may meet with Alexander on equal terms, yet be smutty Diogenes of the earthen vessel still. If we have gained the inner reason of precedence we need not be anxious about all the special cases; thoughts and persons strangely right themselves if we have grace and faith to trust the accidentals, while none the less but the more careful with the essentials. The three aspects of art have their sweetnesses for differently but all truly poetical souls, as also for the same mind at the several stages of its culture, indeed for the particular moods of its varied power from day to day, if not hour to hour.

It matters not that to half-trained lower minds the intensity of delight may seem to rest with the lyric, or even with the dramatic displays. The only competent judges are those who have passed up through all the cultures with feeling's eager joy of desire, and to whom the whole is familiar. Has not Goethe said that song is but the first step in education? And, outside our own breasts, which are the highest sources, it is from such as he who travelled well to the heights that we get axioms if anywhere in art. To put the lyric in the highest place because of its unconsciousness, is the result of indolent

or juvenile or constitutionally limited appreciation, not of the ripe or original judgment that it is safe to follow. Equally in all finishing poetic effort, musical piece, poem, picture, statue, building, or life, of whatever order of dignity, there is a glorious invasion of the unconscious; but with the sufficient souls consciousness is ever at hand to do work when the light of the presence will allow. Here is the last analysis, and beyond it the talent of criticism is utterly unable to penetrate: the genius of harmonic making alone knows what is in that sphere of radiance; and it cannot tell anything but indirectly, by the shapes it wins for men from the house of immortal life. If we should follow the lead of 'pleasure' critics, a gay science indeed poetry would be, ending in the wine cup as the peak and heaven of human happiness and aspiration.

The purest embodiment of the single lyrical impulse that the English language knows, Poe, Shelley's lyric work in comparison, as to quality, being like cart horse to racer, manufacture to nature's growth, convulsive maudlin intensity to conscious glad strength within a limit, has argued, with some ingenuity, for the odd doctrine of the supremacy of the lyric, condemning, as he logically enough from his premises had to do, all long works, *Paradise Lost* very especially, as non-poetical. What he did prove, however, and most of all by the best of proofs, the practice of his life, which to the height of his poetic gift was entirely, and fatally, it happened, sincere, as is the one common characteristic of the born poets, subjecting them to violent misconstruction often by the heavy footed men of prose; what he did prove was that the lyrical poet of the true devotion that defines him to his province, a Moore, a Burns, at

times a Byron, is, if an inspiring guide, by no means a safe one far, and that there are worlds which need other inspiration and guidance beyond his sweet dream and dangerous of higher senses, the best development and glory of which is pure feeling that ends in rest for a time. Who born for fuller broader flight pacifies his Psyche and kisses her here, will, when he passes to the end of the vista, be stopped by the door of a tomb, by the vault of a lost Ulalume. The critics of the gay science have taken courage to put the lyric first from the skilful theorising of the musical rhyme-limited personal-beauty-loving author of, in its sphere, the supreme *Ulalume*; but they are all at sea as to the question. It would be amazing enough that a poet in his criticisms should risk the exclusion of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton, indeed all the acknowledged great ones, from the veritable poetic heaven, were it not known that, if of the partial less masculine cultures, the more we are fitted to our sphere, and it to us, does it seem and become to us the sole scene of surpassing excellence. His theorising declares Poe what he was, an almost perfect lyric poet, the small quantity of embodiment being the invariable condition of high quality in this sort; as to the higher human heroics he was but a weakling. *The Poetic Principle*, his well-known essay, must be named anew *The Lyric Principle*, to have the proper value, and then the examples selected will deserve the praise given; his favourites, Moore, Byron, and Tennyson, in this light, able perhaps to endure the sovereign crowns he puts on their brows, all men of single idea, Shelley and Schiller with them.

Moore and Burns's anacreontics are first true step in the lyrical. Byron's tales and Tennyson's poems of pas-

sion, *Locksley Hall* and *Maud*, may be said to be dramatic lyricism, Shelley and Schiller's poetry, epic lyricism, Hutton striking critical gold as to Shelley's 'chase after lyric unions.' Their genius is whole worlds different from dramatic power, as their plays show. They are lyrists of the second grade. Poe's work is the perfection, the highest reach of purely lyric excellence, because so instinctively limited by personality, mere ideas being not the rulers but the handmaidens to the best vision and shaping of his soul.

When studied with the knowledge that Poe is a singer who has wings for no sphere except the lyrical, but, for short periods, as is the way of that land, of purest almost if possible too fastidious plume there, great insight he will give us. The best concrete example of his theory as to poetry, meaning lyric poetry, can be seen in the well-known necessity of the shortness of a song. Is it not torture to us in listening if we find that a song has many verses? His random wanderings as a critic through dramatic and epical work, though his views of the province and purposes of poetry seem sometimes true, are of only accidental, not of constitutional value. It says much for his quality that he stood up against the besetting sin of his country, as of all new polities, the love of the large; but with carpented *Columbiads* unfortunately he condemned poetry not founded at all on the *tour de force* plan of little ambitious prosaic spirits. That poetic passion is all like natural passion, short if sweet, is not true; rather, the highest effort of poetry is to arrive at eternal harmony, living in the spirit of music, not for moments but for ever, as Spenser's mind might for one

hint to him. Would his theory not make all pictures to be necessarily small to be good, no matter what strength of soul the artist needed utterance for? The highest poetic thought is the eternal song of the soul. The attitudinising minor-Byronic slum-heroic rather ridiculous poet, but far better critic, Baudelaire, who admired Poe to so great and semi-blind a degree, has struck the truth in the words, *Je plains les pöetes que guide le seul instinct; je les crois incomplets.* Fuller knowledge or stronger nature invariably leads forward beyond to the chaster more devotional and prolonged more spiritual more temperate less selfish spheres.

Masson must have imbibed some gay philosophy so to override his own characteristic good sense as to hold that such men as Burns and Byron are poets of the truer temper than Wordsworth and Keats, which must mean that they are more useful to all mankind, now and ultimately. This, too, because the former deal in the theatre-like garish colours of the lower passions, while the latter sing in the white form-awaking sunshine of the world of soul. The clever retort of the 'shepherd' of towns, Rogers, on being asked at least to acknowledge that Byron had fire, 'Yes, plenty of hell-fire,' suits Burns also. The over estimation of Burns is a combination of patriotic and popular mania, founded very much on personal and accidental interest; and, in the paradise of art, he, with his painful self-assertions, independences, in reality, effeminate insufficiency as a man and hero, will subside soon to a right modest, yet because of the severe 'continuity and completeness' rather than greatness of his work, ever real place, just as it has nearly already

happened with his, but much less artistic and exact, if tending to the Pope style, English counterpart, Byron. Both, limited in education, the one in breadth, the other in depth, their apparently great energy being largely the agony of gallant struggling weakness, they were only able to make short excursions into dramatic and epic fields; but *Tam O'Shanter* and *Manfred*, with much of the latter part of *Childe Harold*, are motived from altogether higher inherent power, have more of ideality, the want of which Whitman, whose own excess is false reality, has well noted as Burns's weakness, as it is Byron's, than any of their lyrical work, showing how far up they might have gone had their personal or destined fates allowed. They are mostly singers of the parish or the period. Shelley, and he was a higher than Byron or Burns, told Godwin that he knew his own strained intensity was quite another thing from the strength of the free immortal souls. It was putting the wish to work in the place of actual work. What makes Masson's comparison for a moment seem just, is the fact that both Keats and Wordsworth wrote without having full power of dealing with human passions from above; they never were much farther than in the state of balance, breathlessness, rapture, which is the turning point for noblest work thereafter. Wordsworth failed to use the unconscious sight he had, through his essaying, and disinclination to give the people his vision. He was limited by his person, and could not be a high unselfish making artist of the best type. Keats in *Hyperion* was farther on the way to be a great maker than he at the end of his long life. But who knows if the darkness might not have

rolled back again on the young genius, had he been also appointed long days? The whole four are incomplete partial poets. Burns and Byron's dealing with the passions was the instinctive savage transalpine parochial from below kind, which is only too effective, because it suits the tendency to degradation and waste so strong in cultivated and uncultivated human nature. They never got out of the region of self except at accidental moments. This was their wild heart-sorrow!

Emerson knows better than these critics what the truth is, in the wide aspect. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body; the spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium and wine: these thoughts of his, suggested by Milton's lofty knowledge that the lyric poet may drink wine and live generously, but that the epic poet, he who shall sing of the gods and their descent to men, not Matthew Arnold's ideal epic poet who chronicles histories nor despite Mosaic glimpses from Nebo Tennyson's pale Gaelic phantom, must drink water out of a wooden bowl, since poetry is not Devil's wine but God's wine: such thoughts are known or felt by all the greatest souls of the earth. That Goethe in his old age told Eckerman that stimulation is valuable, proves him essentially a lyric soul; but he is no extravagant De Quincey even then as to his opiates.

The drama, lying between the lyric and the epic, is the sphere where there is the natural escape from the danger of the former, its sensual idle destructive selfish side; as it is the resting place from what can be the destructiveness of the latter, its ascetic knowing or gnostic over-

toiling self-sacrificing devotion: though to its own special intensity there is attached a correspondent evil of screaming crude sensationalism, the art that never works in the depths of imagination but only in external clap-trap, in ineffective newspaper accidents and horrors. The thrilling and thrilled single musical but demonic performer, of which class Paganini is the recognised type; the passionate political music of strophal and antistrophal variety; and the complete universal orchestral sweep that can require from the solitary single note up to the divine rest of manifold unison, leaving no secret nook of charm unvisited: these may be taken as symbolic of the precedence in art. At the heights of all these raptures of soul, passion transforms into the unspeakable white peace of perfect attitude, or rather of rest, youth's ideal, and motion, manhood's, in regions where expression is no more limited. Individual feeling is the lyric last height; social feeling and knowledge ending in the joy or grief of rest, is the dramatic excellence; and the knowledge that is one with love, ending in eternal movement, is the sublime top of epic and highest human and divine energy.

But holding lower ground of exposition, it may be said that the chief characteristic of lyric is the desire after beauty of person, whatever form the lyrical sentiment may assume; and the sweet soft melancholy which is its finishing charm is explained by Poe's feeling, the feeling of Keats and Shakespeare and others before him, that the highest vision of beauty has lovely sorrow, the τὸ ὑγρόν of Praxiteles, as its most moving attribute, its consecrating coronal, love ending in tears the last delight of personal love! A beautiful woman in sorrow of the heart is the

supreme lyric instinctive vision of delight, a fact which resolves the curious thing that woman, who has only the heroism of man for her highest dream, cannot ever reach the last tenderness in lyricism. Hence Goethe's lyrics of which women were the cause are such glories. A war song she might excel all in, or if a painter she might in a battle piece; a love song with the supreme beauty in it she never shall reach, with whatever genius and cultivation. The secrets of definition, of smallness as a perfection, expressed by men's, especially young men's, pet little names, diminutives, for those they dream of, are to be found here. The *Venus de Medici*, the best embodiment of the lyric in sculpture, noblest human love aiming after expressionless rest, is only four feet eleven inches high, just as Titian's girls, the lyric stage in painting to Angelo and Raphael's epicism, have not a vestige of the gigantesque, the heroic, the god-like. The human ideal woman, and no goddess except of the mind, smaller than she is by reason of man's sweet desire of shielding her glory; man, when man was the sculptor, much of his actual proportions, but when woman's will had influence as to the carving, of larger power from her admiration of strength: this is the interpretation of Greece's highest plastic period in the lyric or merely pagan heathen animal aspect. It is its perfection of lyricism that has perhaps more than its dramaticism and epicism gained Greece its deserved fame in the art of sculpture; but its history has told well to the world that this, the first great ideal on culture's path, which properly belongs to youth of an individual, if culture were always regular, is not the field of humanity's highest attainment; for, if the love

of love is in lyricism, the hate of hate, and the scorn of scorn, are there also. Since then, it has been even popularly exemplified, by Christian nations, that the intensity of a higher than individual love can eliminate hate and scorn from the heart, though the born lyrist never will get out of his charmed circle in any age. Shelley saw members of parliament, who break the people's food, 'loathsome.' Lyricism, like young nationality, must hate the sick, the ugly, the weak. Except a man be born again he cannot enter the higher kingdoms of art.

Modern cultivated peoples are practically blinded to what the real width of Greek art was by their collections of its smaller relics. The great epic gods of ivory and gold created by Phidias, and forty feet in height, were, if not the most successful attempts of Greek genius in sculpture, the noblest, because epical: the noblest, as Keats shows in *Hyperion* to all who can understand what art really is, because most elevating us above the little angers, jealousies, and loves of lyricism or immaturity, towards the god-like and the universal. Michael Angelo, Ruskin and Carr's 'first,' is, Reynolds well says, the most epic of the Italian sculptors; but, as with Milton in *Paradise Lost*, the barbaric bogy popular side of the Christian mythology made his work indefinite and grandiose instead of simply freely roundedly grand. The glorious characteristic of expressionless forms and faces that was the aim of the best Greek artist, the same kind of making as that of Keats at his calmest, and of Wordsworth, with Milton in *Comus*, for short moments, is founded in that deep religious epic awe whose excess is the severe monotheistical spirit, revived fanatically by the

over good narrow-brained energetic Puritans, which made the Hebrews condemn all graven images. The human simple natural love or lyricism in the Hellene was stronger than in the Hebrew; and he is, as an individual, therefore not so purely sublime epical a soul, though from his hold of reality a thousandfold better artist. The genuine religious instinct in him is seen, not only in this way of representing the 'unspeakable' glories of deity; all through what is called the Greek drama the spirit is epic, which is shown by the artificially heightened figures, and especially by the grand hiding of poor human faces with famed masks of mysterious power. It is superficial philosophy to imagine, as is prevalent, that he was a laughing merry shapely boy who did all things much as popular fancy thinks genius arrives at its fair deeds. To the true Greek, as to the true man of every place and time, the pulse of the world beats alike. Their philosophy is one. Those who were strong enough to come back with making vigour from the union that allowed them feel the beauty of the heart of all things, as some Greeks and fewer Hebrews, woman-like in their sincerity of intensity and want of imagination, were, clothed their secrets in shapes that their simple brethren could understand, love, and be elevated by, towards also getting into the supreme union which is renovation, conversion, share in humanity. When people say that the Goths, with their cathedrals covered with grotesquery, and full of mystery, were mystics and *religieux* in a sense that the Greeks knew nothing of, they do not yet understand Æschylean and Sophoclean god and hero representation, not to speak of Homeric. The *Jupiter* of Olympia and the *Virgin* of

Athens were awful in a clearer sincerer sense than the ugliest Gothic or Brahminic monstrosities or bugbears for ignorant, childish, or effete peoples. Euripides first got some steps into the dramatic land of realism, which, sceptical of the gods, finds all mystery in relations of men to each other, the nearest side of drama to the personal unconverted lyric sphere. Yet even he was still laden with the spirit of the religious epic; and to put real faces of actors in the place of those of gods, heroes, and heroines, would have been to him also sacrilege. Aristophanes's work was a kind of inverted hopeless reckless protest against the rise of secular philosophies, and of amusement that put the gods aside. Our drama is an irreligious thing, not intended to teach high philosophies, as theirs long was; it is the shadowing of everyday unsanctified life, and perhaps has the best title to the name. Our pulpits are less solemn than the ancient epic displays wrongly called drama were. The fine wealth of the art of Hellas came from the fact that the Greek preserved his balance between the real and the ideal, whereas the Hebrew and Christian ever lost themselves in delirious ideal, and left no perfectly sound shapely fruit, just as with Brahminic contemplation. So true it is that excess of good becomes evil, evil in this sense for man. For the individual it may be such in less degree.

The birth of a balanced artist is the key to new equally clear waves of rich shapes. With him there is hope for the most savage people to be placed among the civilised, in any or all the grades of art, his born power of making being the only limit. It is this makes so futile the theories founded on past supposed historical courses of national

rise, stability, and decay. These indices to the possibilities of the production of art are imaginary. There is no more frequent remark than that Hebrew monotheism, and hatred of images as representations of deity, are proofs of superior civilisation to such as that of the Greeks. Tacitus, in speaking of the ancient Germans says: '*Caeterum nec cohibere parietibus deos, neque in ullam humani oris speciem assimulare, ex magnitudine caelestium arbitrantur:*' the same spirit as that of the Hebrews; but, will anyone say that the nomad *Germani* were more civilised than the Greeks? No ritual or excessive is equally away from healthy art or true civilisation. A polished populace must be moderate polytheists, as the divine persons and angels of Christian nations prove. Didacticism or dry direction cannot train advanced peoples; no, not that of music by Beethoven, Wagner, or Handel. You need not spread the net in the face of the wary birds. If all true art is at depth teaching to live beautifully we must more and more hide its instruments as time goes.

A flood of light might be opened as to the special fields for the effort of man and woman by reason of their different ideals, and the same principles would be found true in the various degrees of art's excellences. To keep to the path, however, the chief characteristic of the drama is the suddenness or difficulty which the word picturesque hints at; a certain hardness, unexpectedness, everyday element being in the drama, the greatest dramatist, like a god of the weather, a Janus, being he who is readiest-witted, most looking-both-ways, or indeed every way, most far-seeing, enthusiastic, most particular and universal, to meet and overcome accidents and varieties

which come from the fortune of the world, by reason of his expedients, by the aptness of his burning swift words and deeds; the climax of the drama not being love's melancholy, but either the completed sadness that ends in silence or the grand freedom of social mirth. The rule of Rome is the best analogue of the dramatic spirit. It is more prosaic than either lyricism or epicism despite its dignity. Lastly, the feature of the epic is the only apparently, because in greater spaces, slower, infinitely more powerful grandeur of higher person, place, thought, energising with free power towards heaven, sublime being the word that covers the greater part of its aspiration, joy, unlimited joy of personal union, the individual the individuals, the universal, being the high and sole end and aim of its structure and impulse. No man was a prophet among the Hebrews till he realised the vision of this divine victory, and attained its coronal, nor can there be a highest poet without the same experience and attainment.

Were it not delaying the dealing with Shakespeare in the light of these thoughts, it were well done, if one could, to strangle that most hideous and of eternal necessity unfruitful hybrid of the half-seers, the dramatic poem, an essential absurdity, beyond description shapeless and distressing to the artistic eye and heart. There are no hybrids in art's kingdom. Its spirits can make what they want, whether drama or poem. A species of sermon, to which measure and sometimes rhyme give special license, it outdoes its prototype, at its worst, in bathos, transcendental 'talk i' the air,' dullness, and, above all, in intolerable endlessness as of fertility of weed. If commonplace and accidental snatches at spangles that the

darkest moving mind will throw off, be the food and making of art, then play on; but the wise man who has not been sermonised into the sound and fury signifying not much more than nothing, and the nod is as good as a wink system of expression, by no means the Miltonic accurate suggestion, will take care not to have surfeit from such far worse than high fantastical wealth of measured parochial fly-away prose, whether of the show or of the other rostra. Byron, who never knew very well what he was doing in his art, not even when popularising greater men's thoughts, and perhaps for this kind of unconsciousness, which might well enough be called puerility, the favourite he is with many, as in particular with the mild philosophers who are in love with unconscious harmonies, gave his authority by naming among others *Manfred* thus, a broken impatient piece of epicism which, despite too apparent copying from the god of the time, Goethe, whose own dramas are of the nature of the dramatic poem when other than lovely lyric idyl, is his best claim to a seat among the Olympians of poetry. It was dangerous to follow his guidance, especially so for mere talent. Barring Beaconsfield, who has the fellow-feeling to make him wondrous kind, of fickle, though flashing, but true ability, the English higher critics, in the main, expositors of Goethe's findings, know the philistinism, or hybridism, or what may better be called the want of the sufficient literary and spiritual valour of 'the lord George'; and perhaps they know it a trifle too much for the proof of their own originality. The German's expressed opinion of the 'portentous' Englishman was not of the high tone we are sometimes invited to think by the comments of

passing writers. Had Byron not been a kind of European incarnation of his Mephistopheles there should have come very certain sounds from that quarter. But, 'suppressed parliamentary speeches,' does seem rather the right stroke of criticism as to the mass of this poet's work. Into the creative world of supreme art he entered only by flying visits, though frequently he seems all but finally boldly securing his home there. Some one has suggestively hinted that his imagination is more that of the novel than of the poem.

It is not a wide guess to say that the standing-ground of most of the remarkable poets of England, of this century, Coleridge, Shelley, Wordsworth also, as well as Byron, was in the revolutionary passion of individualism, lyric querulous lime-light selfishness, its flames slung chiefly by Rousseau, himself set in motion by the only apparently, from Inquisition necessities, cynical and indifferent author of the too fruitful phrase, *Que sais-je ?* Montaigne, the clergy-hating George Buchanan's pupil. They all detest bonds, and keep storming outside round the shrine of inmost poetry of complete forms, of the noble artistic calm that can conquer for shape all passion. Like bandits or sulky children, one hardly need settle which, they keep hugging themselves solitarily outside of life, unequal to the social necessities of dramatic and epic work. If they did enter into the place of the fuller light it was for shortest moments. Their escapes were as for their very lives to their false or perhaps partial liberty. Possibly the political culture of their period, but much more likely the quality of their inherent power, did not admit of them reaching high seats in the temple of immor-

tal fame. It is sad now to see what waste there was, and the thought sometimes doubtfully rises, with its deep shadow of regret, that an English king of poetry might have then taken possession for ever of his kingdom for the race's glorification. The one hardest test of the highest poets none of them can stand, namely, did they be true to their inmost instinct, did they embody their vision independently of contemporisms, did they sell all they had if to follow their genius? Shakespeare and Milton, of Englishmen, were the nearest to gain and keep this independence. Byron's pettishness in *Don Juan*, 'I will be read,' meaning that he would be popular in his day, is his own sentence upon himself as a weakling, or at all events as a failure, so far as greater and greatest things were concerned. The Rousseau, young Goethe, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley rapt-away dreamings are of higher quality than the work of those who 'will be read,' because really the expression of national revolutionary mind of a period, and not of the passing hour; but also are fractional, intense, not calm with the dignity of infinite truth in strong possession. Goethe at all periods could, like the last three mentioned, only naturally with quieter lip and firmer foot, work dead in the teeth of popular disfavour. His writings no more than theirs paid; indeed, he said his work and education cost him half-a-million. He knew that he had the keeping of the divine fire for the comfort of the dear children of men, who seldom know their best benefactors till they are ever gone from them in the flesh. Yet his greatness could not do without the *Xenien*. Against strokes of ungrateful criticism they really were not at bottom, though there was

plenty of that. These epigrams were fruit of unbelief in himself and in the spirit of divinity in him. When in the middle of *Hermann und Dorothea*, which certainly is somewhat lyric, and needed 'moments' therefore, he had to stop for weeks, never seeing, as he said, the hem of the petticoat of a muse. The perfect genius has the nine within call when he requires them. To the fewest is it given thus to *dwell in the spirit*. Has anyone ever done it? Are there not times when indignation, which deeper or at all present love and light could discard, would knot the cords for poor blind trafficking dark-souled but *good* hearts if they only had the ways open to them to all freedom? The dear lesser poets are sometimes the nearest to us, but let us not mistake them for our greatest friends. Goethe is not the Olympian some fancy him, great as he was. What of other modern celebrities?

But be these things as they may, from none of them can we take the instruction that there is such a thing as a dramatic poem in the palace of art's entire widths; as well might it be said that a wax figure is fine sculpture, or the cheers of a mob artistic music. Instead of busying ourselves with buttressing up these 'artless' poets by theories of unconscious harmonies, we should know, and tell others, that it was their destruction that they did not, or could not, recognise, and act on the fact, that the most intense and energetic consciousness of our nature, at its clearest moments, is the only source, so far as the poet's part is concerned, of the divine melodies that are salvation to himself and to mankind. The concentration of the muscular sense in somnambulism or hypnotism by which, it is said, a man's powers are heightened to extraordinary

extent, lifting a heavy weight being play to him then, is the physical counterpart to the strong spirit of divination, which is the concentration or elevation of the spiritual sense for strange deeds of clear sight. To the lyrists the elevation comes only at wide intervals, Coleridge being one of the best, and worst, examples of the impotent waiting for the troubling of the water. Perhaps he and others, notably the greatest German, lost better things by their worship of this truth. The visions, or some kinds of them, come but at intervals, it may be: but human nature is only too ready to put aside the duty of courting them; and in dramatic and epic spheres, if one has gained strength to get into these, the light is freer, stronger, purer, and attainable more easily by reason of the toiler's greater gift. No one has preached better the gospel of toil, as being able to open the doors of joy here as if by magic, than Reynolds; for he himself was a worker, and experienced the freedom and skill that come from devotion.

But there must not be wanderings further among the formless, well, let them by courtesy be called, artists or poets. Already are getting roused monsters and dragons of dark forests. The latest aspect of this kind of poetry is not that for which there is room to be thankful. Jarring, jerky, spotty as if from minds expressing themselves as ink might do from a pepper-box, politico-scientific, such creation is not art, should it or should it not be admired. The thinkers or silent orators, study-declaimers not poets, who are now notorious, may deserve praise in the dearth of real makers, bizarre though they be in choice of uncivilised subjects, and in practice of mechanical methods; they are, nevertheless, not of the

charmed circle where the highest music-attended thought of life moves. The simplicity of virginal power can never be rivalled by the straining of able effort, not to say charlatanic, however faithfully or dexterously induced or exhibited. Ten thousand can preach so, for one who can shape to the true beauty. But let this hybrid poem drop. Would it might drop beyond the deepest depths imagination has ever pictured. Time will know what to do with it, and soon rather than late, it may be guessed.

A one hundred pound professor of poetry at Oxford! so much for finest art there! propounded in an introductory lecture a different theory of the dignities of poetic work from what has now been given. His charming thought that the word 'modern' is truly applicable to the age of Pericles in Greece, and to that of Augustus at Rome, in greater measure than perhaps to the Victorian era, certainly than to the Elizabethan, deserves hearty recognition; but that it is a very subtle thought is shown by the entirely wrong conclusions drawn from it. In dealing with the word there is no distinction made between individual and national culture. That Sophocles, Pindar, and Aristophanes are more modern, in the true sense he gives to the word, than Homer, is the reverse of truth. Homer had a deeper view of the meaning of the world than they had; and it is towards this depth the modernness or perfection of culture makes. If his audience had to have it shown more simply than the audience of the other three required their shallower secrets to be put, that only proves the national popular culture to be more modern in the ages of Pericles or Augustus. This appreciation of poets savours of the ferule, which inclines to value fine

words above real thoughts; and traditional beliefs are apt to be hard to get rid of, especially by half-inspired seers. Would the nightingale sing better in a parrot's feathers? We hear enough about style from those who know nothing of the fact that new thought will dignify style of, at first appearance, the ugliest or, rather, most unusual form, just as the uglier an orator of genius is, often he is the more effective, beloved, and healthful. Medicine is not recommended as our superficial critics would have the medicine of thought, by its sweetness. Tennyson must go before Shakespeare if such sketching as the professor's has truth in it. His form as to mere etymology is better, his design is more restrained, his music sweeter; but is he more poetic? does he see more deeply and with more inmost harmony of *thought*? In other words, has he more of the element of permanence in him? In the professor's clever sense of the word, is he more *modern*? In other and quite as good words still, is he more ancient? is he more immortal? 'Genius,' says one of Pope's critics, 'is the same in all ages, but its fruits are various; and more or less excellent as they are checked or matured by the influence of government or religion upon them.' The first part of this is stronger than the last, to clear perception. If the culture, modernness, depth of wisdom, of the individuals, always went step by step with the riches, or what is ordinarily called the civilisation of a people, then it might be true that Sophocles, Pindar, and Aristophanes are modern, that is, more deeply wise or cultured than Homer; but how often is it that a nation never produces so modern or wise a man as its founder! Lessing's *Education of the Human Race* is responsible for a great

deal of the noisier university theories. It was revived in the *Essays and Reviews* that the world had its infancy, growth, manhood, and decay. This showed itself in *Ecce Homo*. The professor here applies the same thought to each nation. The hands may be the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. In every case, even in Lessing's, which is the best made out because original to him, such theories fail to give anything substantial. As Ward put it, Lessing had a 'mighty intellect:' but the skilful writer of *Laocoon* himself knew and said that he had not the poetic thrill; and this is a good reason why his 'dry intellect' is not to be trusted finally, however able so far. The easy charming philosophers,

> 'Light half-believers of their casual creeds,
> Who never deeply felt nor strongly willed,'

only play at hide and seek, or at attitudes, with these development tools. The Spencer, Huxley, and Tyndall philosophies are little more than the same puerile popularities; their search of facts being quite independent and useful matter. The same method also can be seen in the famous Newman theory of Roman Catholic doctrinal development, a theory which, if a little further developed still, would strangely indeed wipe a hierarchical clergy out of the way of new protestant, and more than protestant, *asserting* thinkers. These developments are all equally fallacious, because blind to the power of original men, to creations by man or maker as to those by the maker. In *Du Contrat Social*, Rousseau, not quite the red republican some think him, has, *Les âmes basses ne croient point aux grands hommes*. Want or presence of them is degradation or advance. Baudelaire says that Poe con-

sidered *le Progrès, la grande idée moderne, comme une extase de gobemouches;'* and the thought is about absolutely right. His *Monos and Una* is a light in the waste. There is, however, a condensation of ideas that tends to popular, though not to personal power. Better tools may or may not improve or wither the quality of a man's individual intrinsic strength. When a greatest spirit, who is always as to his essential quality a gift or accident and not a trained effect, arises like Moses, Homer, Virgil, Dante, or Shakespeare, then, and where he is, it is modern beyond count. All past developments are null. He raises a new wave of thought, the only development there is, which has its religious rise, artistic full-tide, and sceptical or critical ground-ebb awaiting the coming of another founder. Homer, Sophocles, Aristophanes were the three chief typical Greek steps; Moses, David, and Gamaliel the Jewish; Numa, Virgil, and Tacitus the Roman. But there is no similar order to be prophesied of living nations because of possibly fewer or more numerous master souls. Comte caught a glimpse of the open secret, but it was too much for his brain, and he only could externalise into a lifeless half-true system of development what a first spirit masters, and by wise practical forms applies to actual life of man. The future development will be always in the power of the man of complete genius. Theological metaphysical positive steps ever co-exist in the same proportions to him. He will only accommodate himself to the highest culture of the place or time, as far as it will suit his purposes. After knowing all that is done, he may have to bare the world of thought and fact to its foundation, so as to build after his ideal. And

as to the drama being the highest expression of poetry, this dogma the professor has got from the playing with Aristotle of the young Oxford days, that 'medical man of wonderful research,' in Gladstone phrase. Hebraism, if there never were a Plato, brings one who, no matter whence the thought come, can judge its value, at least out of the weakness of thinking that society gatherings, either sacred or profane, can rise to such supremely glorious heights as silence and contemplation of pure epic thought. Aristotle himself, inconsistently enough, puts the study before the theatre, and lamely tries to set himself right by saying plays can be read at least as well as be seen. They are not plays if they can. The professor has no thought but the commonplace one that an epic is a merely national chronicle of some victory or other newspaper event or events. 'All delineation by a great thinker will be epic,' is a dim thought of Carlyle's that points the way to the truth. Dante and Goethe had quite different ideas from nationalities, in their best toil; the latter getting through the woods considerably, if with great difficulty, ere he knew that 'the forms there's no restraining,' and also knew, if he ever did fully, what to do with them. Perhaps such theory of poetry owes some of its existence to the Macaulay national-ballad sham-epic mania that prevailed, inspiring Freeman, Cox, and others to curious imitation.

Partial truths, however, are what may be expected from the universities for some time yet to come, if not always. When the elementary teaching of youths under twenty is considered the function of such bodies, as their dignitaries confess, no one need expect learning and judgment to issue thence, more than from the very necessary

pedantry of higher boarding schools. All but all the spiritual life in the country has grown up wild, and it is not good in quality nor much in quantity. It is patchy from the isolation forced upon it, and violent because free from the responsibility of sharing the ill and weal of the national organisation. The foolish nation looks up to sleepy stupid shepherds that have no thought beyond, if as far as, the two or three dozen persons about them. Their very plainest duty, writing what is in them for popular use, they will not do; nay, do not realise that this is the only ground on which they can feel honest in passing an hour in their comfortable chairs and sinecures. They seem to have understood only one passage of one writer all their academic lives, 'O that mine enemy had written a book,' and to have thence got the vision of foes innumerable around them, Satans, thrones, principalities, dominions, and powers.

'O come strane, o come orribil forme!'

There should be some device of law or honour by which each man, such as they ought to be, must write at least something yearly as the plain return to the nation for its trustful kindness to them. If true men of learning, their valuable books would hunt away the vile innumerable trash that at present the hungry people must feed upon. But there is no genuine faith in the power of spiritual effort. The clergy that have issued from those silent havens, slumberous to the nation's wide-spread deterioration, or at all events checked insignificant progress, mental and physical, are at best only fitful believers in the superiority of new mental toil over dull outworn regularities.

Hinc lucem et pocula sacra! is it so, *almae matres?* or only *Hinc umbram et pocula!* Casting aside all thoughts of the flesh-pots, men must come up out of the house of bondage of yet another heathen religion before there can be the milk and honey of the promised land.

CHAPTER V.

CULTURES AND PEOPLE.

THE two cultures that, having some life in them, are the fashion, and have been so too long, are effectually choking England's growth. The pharisaism that sniffs at all vigour, chiefly because it has little; that cannot let the people come between the wind and its ridiculous conforming nobility; that will not make but superfine infinitesimal hay itself in the fields of life, nor let others, if it can hinder, prepare good real fodder for the winter while the sun of truth shines; that plumes itself on its inherited or robbed power of washing itself, on the outside be it noted only, while the many go for enhancing contrast unwashed: these are some of the signs of the one culture from which suffering comes to the weaker ones. The other culture is still more fatal, because it comes like an angel of light, though in reality it is a destroying devil. The science whose last height of training makes the mind to be a 'clear logical engine,' is the deceiver: a kind of engine that has plenty of cold water in it, but no fire to create steam and force and motion and life. The stand-point of all the vulgar horde that would arrogate the position of being the only valuable leaders in culture (have they not said

that their science is to be the sole ruler of human life soon?) is precisely the same that can be met with among the boors at village markets. Their common sense is equivalent to the clear logical engine; and, Will it pay? Can we handle it? Is he, she, or it, a fact of the senses? are the ultimate questions with both classes of men. As the men of books, the teacher and the preacher his nearest examples, are the scorn, and the secret terror all the same, of the boor; so the spiritual men, the thinker, the artist, the poet, are the scorn, and terror also, of the mere scientist. Have I not made all these crops grow by the might of my hand? says the heart of the uncultured practical boor? Have I not stubbed Thornaby wastes? Let God Almighty and parson leave me aloän. He forgets that he is but the steward of the productive force of nature for all men, not for farmers only. Have I not filled the land by the inventions of my head? have I not built bridges and Babylons? says the same heart in the typical man of science. 'Your worshippings and dreams are worthless; food and clothes are the true heaven:' this is what each of them says to the spiritual class that keep the world a place of sufficient moral beauty to prevent brutal strength of arm or head from crushing everything and everyone into its own coffers and stomach, and after that from dying of grief like the somewhat mythic Alexander because there would be nought more to crush. Man shall not live by bread alone, is higher science than even refined senses and experiment can reach. There are none glibber than the scientists as to the foolishness of the people in believing their senses, as, for example, that the sun rises and sets; but

they entirely forget that their sharper sight is still only sense, and therefore equally fallible and illusory.

As the unspiritualised 'man of land,' when left to his instincts, is sufficiently marked in history the slave-maker of his fellows, so the 'man of science' will prove himself the like degenerator of his species, if he have his way, unruled. The agricultural labourer of dark, to our shame if of modern, ages, is the exact prototype of the manufacturing one. Indeed, if we do not immediately find the check to the, individually perhaps unconscious, torturer of the latter, as we in some measure have done for him of the former, the lowering of the manufacturing human creature will reach the brutal, and the worst form of it, the weak and therefore cowardly cruel brutal, with geometric speed. Ruskin, although grinding in the prison-house of boarding-school elements that should be the palace of thought, and in narrow-brained pre-Raphaelite puritanism also, feels, but certainly too hysterically, this terrible terror of the present and near future. He cannot see the problem nor the proper cure.

Conformity or catholicism Anglo-Roman, and so-called science, which is the actual nonconformity or protestantism of the time, are destructive evils, as at present; but they will turn, like Caliban after his foul attempt at seizing ruling power, and his ill-merited pardon, to be useful when the true guide of life rules them, the shapely thinker, the prime politician, the Prospero, the poet. '*L'État est l'ouvrage de l'art.*' His is the sole sufficient culture for the best good of man; and it leaves none of the physical or mental powers idle but the evil ones.

Our universities should hold up such ideal, in the

first and last place, not the bread and butter one, which is but too easily and too widely appreciated, the conformists and the scientists or nonconformists making it at least the thirty-eight of their thirty-nine articles, quite agreed as to this practicality. 'Let us divide the spoil' is the translation modern of 'Let us pray.' When there is no moral poetical return, on the part of the great cleric teaching body, to give life to the actual toilers or wresters of goods from nature's hard but just hands, its policy degrades to the scamping, 'Let us conjure our salaries from poor blind big-hearted giant populace no matter for any of his aches.' This is the diametrically opposite attitude to that of the true ministers and priests of the ever weak but loving people. The money makers, the capitalists themselves, are kinder to them, though not by intention, but by the necessity of money-getting. The abused scholasticism of the middle ages at least allowed the people to have as much joy at heart as made life a desirable tender homeheld shapely thing. If we could from some deep source raise the living waters of new poetry, we might drink, and get power to drive to their proper duties these giants, to let the hearts of men rejoice in the fertile beautiful valleys, that shape themselves for beauty, and not for the literal destruction which the devil of exclusive conformity causes by the sacrifice of its younger sons and dowerless daughters in the arms of the Moloch of prostitution, the sum of all prostitutions being unproductiveness of body and soul, and which the devil of blasphemous boorish science causes by offering premium to the production of premature, multitudinous, sickly, and disgusting population. Each of them preaches

with fearful power that the beautiful restraint of moral and spiritual beauty must be taken and thrown into the sea: let it not show face in these lands of blooded aristocracy, of boarding-school learning; in these towns of infinite machines, which rule miserable manufacturers, masters and workmen equally, with the iron rod of supply and demand, in the bitter prison that is double-walled by greed and poverty. There is no room but for a handful between these two giant-ruled classes of those who live sane human lives: indeed, they are robbed on either hand of the material pleasures that are the right analogues of the spiritual ones; so that theirs as yet is more preaching by precept than by example, because of the terrible destruction and greed of the monsters on each side that leave hardly any possible beautiful fellowship of man or maiden by which the example should stand out as the light it would be in the desert.

The only spiritual warriors we have had these thirty or forty years, the Carlylian troop, and exactly of the temper of Cromwell's 'Ironsides,' for good and ill, are manifestly weak against the hylic enemies. To take their leader, who represents his disciples only too exactly, under all his clever advertisements, his books being as to their very lettering an attempt at homœopathic cure or capture of the blatant eye, he is neither more nor less than the fanatical over-thoughted Knox or Cromwell puritan, one of the so intense haters of shams that in history have always become shams ultimately, who could cry, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon,' and who, like any covenanter or mosstrooper, would proceed to blood and fire as the holiest work, for poor idiocy of conscience.

No Jew of them all would, if Agags and their peoples could be hewed in these days, set up a theocracy, or idiocracy, for this is the exact word, more eagerly and remorselessly. What moderated his native fanatical fervour was at the right moment to find in Goethe an attempt to marry poetic philosophy to the Christian dogmas of the new birth, of immortality, of heaven and hell. Take away what is in him of Goethe, whose Christian leanings, from ethnic considerations, he pulled into the use of evangelical puritanism with the intense eagerness that has so deservedly made him a leader; what he got from Richter and *Tristram Shandy* of humour, burlesque, and oddity; what from Fichte of philosophy: and you have a noble if curiously small residuum; but it is of the firebrand fanatical character that would force the world to be good solely after the method of his apprehending of the truth. He and Ruskin are, for their mental balance, too well read in the Jewish bible. Drillers, for example, though they are professedly, they have no eyes for the humanising national moral effects of punctual railways, of exact finance; only for their abuses. Over love of dwelling beside, and indeed embracing continuously, the sense, or first step from sense, real, is the one cause of weakness of all the present best prophets of spirituality. Goethe helped them from mere parochial realism of church and chapel catechisms, but the limit of himself was that he never could conquer fully out of prosy realism into the idealism or vital reality that is mediator between god and man. Caught early by the false selfish limited idealism of Rousseau, as his *Sorrows of Werter* shows, he, at least, unlike Byron and most of the French

poets since Rousseau, especially Lamartine and De Musset, got disgusted with it; and his reaction to realism was so strong that afterwards he became more of a man of science, even in mental matters, than a poet to elevate and bless humanity. The Carlylians have toiled chiefly in this lower kingdom of facts, which is certainly a step better, but no more, than Rousseau's false fictioning; and here we have the explanation of their instinctive abuse of, yet respect for, mere scientism, being themselves too much but scientists in the moral element, as autobiographic demand of minuteness and pre-Raphaelite pictures show. Like all puritans they have little or no sense of art, ritual, distance, procession, grading of life. The life of Teufelsdrockh is the nearest thing among them to shape or art; and that is not remarkable for the beauty of its proportions! What sent Carlyle to write, and overrate, the *History of the French Revolution* so eagerly but unconscious sympathy with the logistic realism founded on that sense philosophy of Locke and Condillac which made the 'sea-green Robespierre' the nearest modern type to the thorough prophets, Hebrew, Mohammedan, and other, of extermination for some partial idea? Had the Frenchman succeeded, the Reign of Terror to our realists would be the noblest Herculean cleansing of Augean stables, the right modern civilised way of clearing out the Canaanites. Carlylians are good guides if there are no better. Woe to the people if it is altogether, and long, in their hands, noble and well-meaning though they are. Shakespeares can live with Slenders and Shallows, even with Falstaffs; they cannot.

The more aggressive of the two prevailing monsters, science, which has been hand and glove, by its nature

and antecedents, with the Manchester school of free-trading politicians, as even locality itself advertises by rise of workshop colleges or, save the term! universities, would invade the seats of what should be the true learning. It has, to take an example, the same right to a professorial chair in such a place as Oxford that bootmaking has, both being science, and of exactly the same temper. The true ideal of learning is quite other than to institute shops by which inventions can be made for greedy vulgar merchants, in the first place, while railway and other fares, languages, and nations exist much as they are, to rob other peoples under the banner of free trade, which is a possibly just *modus vivendi*, all the Cobdens and Chevaliers nevertheless, only in a cosmopolitan unrealisable utopia; and, in the second place, to fill a few capitalists' purses, their pockets being the test as to when protection is better than freebullying and *vice versa:* the horrible consequence, as result of all, creating artificially a population that a patriot hardly dare think of for grief of being unable to put strength and order into such abject weakness and myriad confusion, and that a cosmopolitan for his theory's sake, if not personally, would wish at the bottom of the sea. 'The more the worse,' is the fearful political fact of the coming time; and it will by and bye be seen that scientistic free-trade is responsible for it. The Malthusian law of food and population is evaded for a time, hardly escaped; but not in Malthus's way is help to be found. '*Redressez les opinions des hommes, et leurs mœurs s'épureront d'elles-mêmes.*' This is Rousseau's cure; but there is a still better, the best: give forms of beauty, archetypal beauty, that the entire

people may live and love beautifully. These Mancastrians have hitherto had the wind for their sails by literally stealing a march on, and thereby the property of, the other unready and weaker nations; the inventions of machines being here first applied on the exorbitant scale to human life. The wages receivers, by their stimulated and formless godless increase, are in number now up with the produce of the trick of robbery; the nations, after more than their fair share of the 'struggle for existence' that cuts down two thirds of man before maturity, will make by and bye for themselves what they need; and exodus or famine of a one-ideaed weak manufacturing population, the flood of false prosperity subsiding from natural and national causes, looms as the enigma that the scientific Mancastrians have left for the patriot and the man to meet. A war has been looked on by some thinkers as a merciful providential surgeon's knife, and Gauls, Helvetians, Goths, Huns undoubtedly have even yet a political lesson for us. The decline of liberalism, so mysterious to the featherheads, has its cause largely in these considerations; and it is not the worst popular sign of the time. The free-trade scientific cow has something poisonous in her exuberant milk it is beginning to be felt: nature's slow methods are not so unprogressive as the false gospel of scientism has for the last forty years busied itself, and with temporary success, in showing. Read Blanc's curious calculations as to our poverty though with fifteen horse power for each person. The Mancastrian has feathered his shoddy own nest in accordance with the get on at any cost policy; perhaps this is all he meant. Let each take care of himself and

the devil have the hindmost; let the fittest survive, in man's case the most deceitful; let the strong ones rob not only the weak but the strong or good: are fine maxims on the platform of which science and trade are to conquer the last homes of whatever learning or wisdom there ought organically to be. Indeed, the weak-souled exclusive conservating monster is step by step being wheedled to ultra-radicalism, by the other monster's cunning, out of its possible path of return to true learning and transformation into renewed beautiful saving shape; and this destruction is to be by its own act. Who could guess that a university, for instance, would consider it as one of its functions to give, within or without its walls, the elementary instruction of mechanic institutes to indiscriminate mobs? One can only understand this as coming from the private money-making boarding-school. It is the cowardice and unbelief of running away from hard high work of wide influence to easy low commonplace declamation. Never did a university more than now that there are oceans of waste unruly science and literature everywhere, require to condense its power, not diffuse it, above all if for mere gain, as in Scotland's case; and for no reason stronger than that it ought to command, as well as inspire, by the quality and quantity of its actual produced literature, an overflowing irresponsible unshapely often able but oftener silly and impertinent press. The natural sovereign in culture and education is with us a *fainéant*; the university has little perception of its royal duties. The king who sets himself to making shoes or even locks when his subjects need his presence and best thought, comes to grief. Perhaps the democratic

disorder here also is to conquer for a time the monarchical real; the monarchical ideal it never can. Why should it be impossible to find a one-man power to rule a university to its purpose? In his *Sturm und Drang* period, if indeed he has ever left the tempest for the calm, Carlyle, or Teufelsdrockh, talked, believing that courtesy and grimace were one, some nonsense about a cast-metal king, quite dark then as to the constitutional king being the nearest approach to the ideal, which Colin Clout could tell him, and that the office is perhaps best filled when *laissez faire* and courteous presence are enough. The wiser conservatives of Oxford, and elsewhere, know this saving truth in political matters; why will they not apply it to literary? The principle is the same, whether cast-metal or true ideal. If the national interests prevailed over vested, as they always ought, the most earnest and proved leaders of the thought of their period should sit first in the universities, with, after royalty, the highest emoluments and dignities in this kingdom as their plain right, for the people's best good, just as there is search for the best men to the best office in other moderately well organised and understood systems, like the church, the law, the army, the navy. Carlyle and Ruskin, as the literary archbishop and bishop of what thought of the life-giving kind there has been in this time, should long since have been the crown and ornament of Oxford, to give shape by their presence to the present confusion of learning, and as certainly should Tennyson have been years and years ago, if we knew our national true good, the archbishop of Cambridge's literary aspiration. Such men left to the constitutional freedom, but also the wide

responsibility, of the most regal offices perhaps that can be, would, by being in the right position, if they merely kept that, give a power and tone to thinking, the hardest task in the world, Emerson says, and to high living, the like of which there is no experience at all among us. The old man can remember his young generous enthusiasm. What is it to a sincere student that Thomas Thomson or William Williamson are provost, warden, principal, or anything else of rectorial dignity? Tell the scholar that the tried public heroes of the time await him, when he reaches certain excellences, to give him their presence and, no matter if it be ever so little, fellowship, and the world becomes to him a glory. All mean things and weakness vanish from his path of beautiful free toil. Yet such plain fact as this, the most powerful by far of educative influences, is nowhere taken account of. 'George Eliot,' if she had her rights in time, who so wise to say, or represent, at all events, what woman needs? and the blundering, or rather the ill-guided, it may be ill-starred nation loses the strange light, but most powerful, that issues from the brows of the leaderships of genius with or without an even ostensible effort. A vote of parliament to give to learning hearts that can feel and thrill others' hearts, heads that can think and that shine without being fully conscious of the power the shining has for rising souls, would do more for education and national renovation than dozens of elementary or other bills. This would be the true endowment of research.

The ill educated small-brained little poets and writers which sudden popularities have made, have done the nation the great evil of teaching it to distrust its wisest seers, as

if of the same temper as themselves, Plato's deservedly doomed ones. The philistines and stupid heads who hate sterling power that sees right through their schemes, have not been slow in accepting the popular theory of extravagance, if not crime also, as the *sine qua non* of genius; and the consequences are daily getting more apparent: an England without art, without sound intellectual education, especially among its better classes; and crowded with a population that decreases in physical power, and what mental it has, and increases in number, as is the way of poverty and weakness, till famine begins to rise the future genius of these shores, it would seem. Rome will enact its old tragedy in this new land, if there are no prophets to save us and to lead us to true healthful living of thought and action. The 'sage poets, taught by the heavenly muse,' as Milton puts it, must story for us anew in 'high, immortal verse' what will shut the entrances that lead to hell, and open those leading to free delight of beauty's energy. We have had sufficient of the witless destructive boy drivers of Apollo's chariot, this century. Let it be quite enough for our Hesperian Naiades to have given each of these presumptuous light heroes, whom the gods did not love though they often died young, a generous *tumulus* and a *saxum* marked with the old *carmen*:—

> 'Hic situs est Phaethon currus auriga paterni,
> Quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis.'

There is now the search for some renovation to all this insufficiency; and should Shakespeare give an idea in the right direction, quite a new value shall arise for him and his culture. If, as Emerson says, he also is a

'profane' person, then we must expect longingly and lovingly the 'poet-priest' that is to come for the great 'reconciliation.' Poetry will use up all the healthy knowledge the world can give; but it will change this ugly thieflike ungraceful speed and universal destruction of the better parts of manhood and womanhood around us, into restrained dignified beautiful motion, and into the salvation of a degenerating race that, were it not for the temporary, very temporary, accident of gun discovery, one well trained liver, even a savage, could beat a thousand of, without practising much the stratagem of the Horatius. As to mind, that of scientism's mechanic, is like the eye of a needle, the gateway only for one thread for ever and ever. The head of a pin will by and bye be an hyperbolic simile for his brain. The waste sons of boarding-school culture come in neck and neck at the same race of excellence. If art, not the art of the babes that play with tools of which they know nothing as to the infinite power of them, can cure all this, as it alone can, let it have as free and full a welcome as can be given it. Lyric, dramatic, or epic, in stone, music, colour, and, above all, in word; let them have the dominion, in their due ranks; and the field of, not only English but human life, will again blossom into that joy and liberty which shape the beauties of restraint for themselves as their best perfection.

For what is entirely patient non-tyrannic life-regarding science, not a word may be said but of sincerest praise. It cannot but do good, and it can never exhaust reverence from the people, if there are makers only to use it. Did not the great poetic dream, when his facts theorised, of Copernicus, that made the earth only one of the

many stars, by no means the all-engrossing centre to gods, angels, and men, revolutionise human living? He was the Socrates of modern Europe; and the prevailing Christian mythology had the same cup of death for him, logically, as the Greek mythology had for the earlier sage. We must always be ready to take our escape from condemned dwellings, however poetic they may have been. Heaven above the solid sky, hell beneath the feet, fled like night dreams before his vital thought; and the home or prison of the souls of men became spiritualised from material crudities for ever. The terrified priests thought their occupation was gone, not knowing the fullest depths of human nature. It was not a light thing to have one's heaven and hell swept away with a word. Destroy the wizard, is the poor instinctive self-preserving but really self-destroying ignorant cry that makes martyrdoms which are the saddest disgrace of history. Religion will secure itself a foundation even if the bodies of men were proved phantomic. It will have its heaven and hell at all periods. This is sure, though timid weak unbelieving teachers have little faith, and therefore turn cruelly as terrified women against their very saviours. Yet they *do* fight and persecute to protect the little ones. Newton has made astronomy itself a wide religion of awe. Faraday recognised the poetic thrill that his highest successes ever had as their best fruit. It is not with discovering master spirits, whose hypotheses are essentially poetic imagery, often epical, that there is a single whisper of quarrel, but with the downward, and nothing but downward, measuring, dividing, travellers from such hypotheses, who will not themselves look up to whence they got their force, nor let others, but

who microscopise and materialise till the heart and soul die into an exact machine or automaton called 'man of science,' a term that has not a little of the *lucus a non lucendo* characteristics. 'Unity of life' might not be grudged to the Darwins and Huxleys and Tyndalls, if facts were at all sufficient, and if truth went first, and newspaper and social celebrities second. Did they claim for their hypothetical theories that they are only great teaching instruments, which they have certainly proved to be, no wise heart would be other than intensely thankful; but when they begin to use such mechanism for other purpose than the acquisition and classification of knowledge, when they try to take their dead dry tools into the kingdom of the soul, it is time to say, No, you cannot open this world-oyster with the crowbars of crude physical theories. The true 'man of science' uses his knowledge of littles to rise to the great, the universal, as Columbus, and all large originators, did; the mere artisan who assumes that name takes the great, to dwell, as his honour, among the littles. Better make a theory that would apply to beautiful human life out of the knowledge of three facts, than nurse ten thousand for display and exclusive vanity or selfish use.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DRAMATIST AS HIGHEST POET.

ACCORDING to the natural grading of poetic effort, then, while Shakespeare wears the dramatic garment he is not clothed for the noblest achievements. 'Some able and appreciating critics,' says Emerson, 'think no criticism on Shakespeare valuable, that does not rest purely on the dramatic merit; that he is falsely judged as poet and philosopher. I think as highly as these critics of his dramatic merit, but still think it secondary.' This is valuable assurance from one whose announcements are more to be trusted than volumes of professorial monologue of sensebound understanding. The drawback is that the announcements are left detached; nothing further is got in the words which follow those. Could it be shown that in the dramatic garb Shakespeare felt most comfortable, it would be not too bold to say that this alone would place him in a secondary position among poets, however brilliantly he may have jousted; and the best proof that he did so feel would be found in his frequent, continued, and decidedly willing donning of it, if this were the fact. Too well known is it to men in all degrees of culture, however, that their purest desire must often, in large measure, submit to the evil influence of necessity; and it

is not a little wonderful that the greatest souls are sometimes the most submissive to the accidents of life, spinning what webs they can from any chance shrub or wall they are blown towards. It was an extreme opinion that if he had not got into trouble about Sir Thomas Lucy's deer he would have been content to waste his sweetness on the Stratford air. It may be that for the wide all-seeing all-feeling nature there is such possibility of early sleepful rich acquiescence; but the necessity of production, which is the never failing effect of strong growth, makes village Hampdens, mute inglorious Miltons, impossibilities. Yet there is a certain generous carelessness, a facility, especially in youth, of being easily led into curious places, in powerful natures. That he fell readily into what had some portion of speech to his spirit, the dramatic rage of his time for pageantry and symbolism of all kinds, is likely the fact, though poverty may have had its influence also. Whether he felt long and always comfortable in the sphere is a question of great moment.

As to substantiating by quotation what requires to be said, that is a method of certainty of the same kind as proving theological controversial doctrines by texts, or arithmetical theories by statistics gathered from all quarters. Those who have not read much of the poet, and who are not acquainted besides with the products of the world's other great souls, may be learners, but cannot very well or wisely be judges for the present. Where there is hard honest struggle to discern truth in difficult cunning spheres, another barrier to perfect exposition opposes itself. To those who cannot take the full steps of manhood there seem to be everywhere gaps of too

great extent. To the expert judges less detail than what has to be given is often desirable. The latter have realised how true the far travelled words of Wilhelm Meister's indenture are: 'Life is short and art is long.' Hippocrates knew and acted on the distich, Seneca quoted him with approval, Goethe evolved it likely from the German moral consciousness, and Longfellow from perhaps the American less moral unconsciousness. They are all sufficiently agreed upon the point that no one has a right to say to the artist when and where he is at work, searching for truth that may bring forth beauty, one word more than is necessary. At any rate, clap-trap quotation, useless when not hurtful, need not trouble either the simpler or the more skilled. Piling up lists of authorities is also a kind of trick that the shrewd searchers easily see through. A few not at all very harassing days as to brain work in a good library would fortify the poorest piece of thought till it became large and imposing to a certain kind of cowardice. On any subject of the higher kind there could debts be acknowledged to thousands of volumes. The worst of this Buckle method, which threatened to become an epidemic, and has even attacked contemporary monthly literature, not to mention such subjects as 'superstitious' religion, is that the more reference and authorities after a certain limit there really are consulted, the weaker inevitably becomes the original thought of the writer, and we have only cold collation served up again instead of hot bracing thinking. If to refer thus to the Montaigne and Montesquieu trained philosopher of history may look like free shooting, let it be said that of the pure gold in him, which is perhaps less

than was once imagined, of the solid fruitful ground of him, there is deep appreciation, while at the same time it may not be without profit to know that there are attenuated seemingly firm but dangerous places, whereon mind exercise of the healthful kind cannot judiciously be indulged. It were an easy matter, and a kind of duty that needs only some plodding, to give exact proofs to statements and opinions that might be questioned. It is rather too much waste of time to suppose objections in order to answer them. The first piece of duty which the active mind demands of anyone making statement is to give the results; the methods by which they have been found are of quite secondary importance. Leisure and luxury may allow the massing of particulars if the new words sound according to right reason. The wise busy, but not too busy, man's question is, Never mind how or where you found the things, but what have you got? Indeed, it would be easy to show that this tyranny of reference to authorities is one of the greatest evils of literature, and therefore of civilisation. To the true workers in the world of books it is a species of insult to have all these materials of building displayed so fulsomely, as if the same sources of information were shut from all but certain favoured royal individuals; and to the public it is a continual threat that they must not form any opinion different from those of the omniscient persons. They know all things and something beside, witness their erudition. Half-a-thousand train-bearers sometimes, all the letters of the alphabet captains of troops, for the short procession of one volume: who dare say that its author is not a veritable emperor of wisdom?

The same spirit is at work here as is among the small critics who try to pin Gullivers to the ground by the hair with their Lilliputian knowledge of notes and corruptions, they themselves being the real mites in the cheese. Strangely enough too, certain, surely morbid, appetites like the mites best! When Warburton got among them once there was such a shouting and marshalling, as if the giant must be destroyed or the heavens might fall. He is perhaps the only man who, up to his time, got below the surface a little, of all the annotators; and had he in his intellectual manhood attended to Shakespeare, instead of mostly in his youth, quite another kind of appreciation might have been the English and worldwide one now than exists. For two or three powerful hints as to the real constructive motives of some passages in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, the author of the original book of his time, *The Divine Legation of Moses*, had the attack of the battalions of busybodies to laugh at; though it is possible inner good-nature stopped him from going further in directions that only seemed to raise useless storm. The little tyrants browbeat savagely when they can get near the strong man asleep or reclining too much at his ease. The experience will do him good also should he be wise. If he rouse his strength, they scamper for their lives; and a weakness of his own alone, if ever, will be the means of delivering him into their power.

A criticism of this book of plays, taken as the work of one author, which, despite writers and societies of superabundant external knowledge, is still the popular prevailing method of consideration, would be extraordinary could it cover the ground to any moderate extent. In the

region of the understanding, it might be said, these dramas stand supreme. The wit, the didacticism, the artificiality rather than art, of the writer, his transference of his conceptions of character into words imperfect only from over sympathy, his practicality, his good sense, his versatility, his universality; these surpass in their power and degree all that has yet been shown by any dramatist. We are brought up, however, while sketching complacently on the canvas thus, by the feeling that not only do they surpass, but are eternally above or below, for good and bad, what any single soul could do. There are inexplicables which the deeper and more attentively we read become the more difficult to understand. Except in two of them, there is an unaccountable mixture of the lowest and the highest elements of literature, these latter, by their enriching power, deforming the structures of the writer to an extent unparalleled. In the two exceptions there is perfect uniformity of lofty intention; but, as to the others, the artist is of most untamable contradiction, getting to his playwright ends by building, or being forced to build, mansions of any and all materials, gold, silver, copper, stone, rubbish, mud, earth, anything that will add effect of every kind. Whether there are Ariadnic threads to discover the structural meaning of more than two of these plays can be doubted, though it is possible the method may not be entirely limited to them. To take the whole collection to be the composition of one mind were as wise as to consider the Hebrew books to be the work of an individual, and then proceed to show how this portion was the product of youth, that of manhood, another of age, this other composed in country surroundings, that very evidently

saturated with town experience, another the result of court life, a last, for the present, the reflection of the gatherings of beggars and vagabonds. The only phrasing that would apply might be some such as 'the eldest' gave to the hero of the *Wanderjahre*: 'They are complete enough to satisfy, fragmentary enough to excite, barbarous enough to rouse, tender enough to appease, and for how many other contradictory merits might not these books, this one book, be praised.' The thought of a wonderful period, or of an extraordinary people, could always be put into the mould of so comprehensive a sentence. Its applicability to these dramas is proof quite other than the historical fact searching evidence that there are elements in them not to be explained by the workings of one soul. Hippolyta's discussion of the origin of wondrous tales, fabulous and legendary as well as everyday, is suggestive as to the probable origin of most of these plays:

> 'But all the story of the night told over,
> And all their minds transfigured so together,
> More witnesseth than fancy's images
> And grows to something of great constancy;
> But, howsoever, strange and admirable.'

Nationally we have rather inclined hitherto to keep up the mist about our prodigy, doing him thereby strange disservice. In Pope's words, it is true that

> 'As things seem large which we through mist descry,
> Dullness is ever apt to magnify;'

but it would seem as if more than dullness were at work among our writers. Though they had no more than the external evidence of ultra-Celtic Malone, who whitewashed Shakespeare's statue, but did something better for the

poet, namely, take off whitewash, it might, if by no means settle the matter, at least make it likely that such figure as the English popular and largely cosmopolitan Shakespeare never existed. The greater garish display of the sun through the fog, is the subject of commendation and magniloquence to some; the lover of truth likes to study the heavenly bodies clear from these terrestrial obstructions as much as possible. The smaller-looking bright sun has wonders far away in its own constitution which make him despise the ruder praises, flame, or inner motion of miraculous power that reaches beyond imagination, with other phenomena of thought-stirring influence; not unlikely one earth more on its cooling path for new immortalities. Separated from the clinging, in most cases, miasma, of other and lower minds, Shakespeare may be a centre whence fruitful light and heat will come such as hearts have not yet known, making a mild homeborn spiritual clime for us, where our youth will come back, and where we shall know what the fountain of immortality, without blazoning, really means. Perhaps his may be, after the veil is taken away, one of the faces that have fewest spots, the shining of which may be too strong for all eyes but the inspired brotherly ones.

Heminge and Condell, the first editors, whose preface is a model of histrionic flippancy, silly admiration, and 'no intelligence,' are much in the same way responsible with Macpherson of Gaelic fame for the calling of this, the popular English Ossian, from the vasty deep of Elizabethan literature and high tide of protestant renaissance thought in vigorous free Saxon-Norman England. When foreign nations met him his reception was peculiar. Germany takes

to Ossians enthusiastically; France is not so easily caught. Voltaire's instinct, which France then felt to be hers also, as nations are really only their best men, that the so-called Shakespeare was not an object of criticism at all, but some impossible 'drunken savage,' was a true one, though he did not, likely with his impulsive intuitive positive rather feminine nature could not, explain the reason. As the thorough *en rapport* man of a time and country, whatever else they were, pre-eminently literary, his feeling deserved, and deserves still, the best attention. The index to revolutionary recent France, the diffusive high-flying grotesque romantic genius, Victor Hugo, has neither singly nor as representative the same claims to our faith on the general question as to the type and extent of the Englishman. His passion for license, and also that of the time in his country, made it quite a desirable thing, if possible or not, to have a god in his romantic kingdom of the encyclopædic gigantic protean characteristics, to whom he could, well, not bend the knee, for that is not of the kingdom of the newest Parisian civilisation, but extend magnificently the Gallic hand. Neither of the Frenchmen having time or desire to spend the necessary labour for sympathy with him they speak of, the opinion of Voltaire ought to be the better general one, and it is, despite Hugo's superlatives.

The Schlegels may represent the German enthusiasm, for they wished to include as Shakespeare's some other plays, the generally supposed work of Marlowe, who wrote more than he has had credit for, being a fat quarry of the rough and ready raw kind for adapters. If extremes meet, the cleverest Frenchman and the able German critics are at one, for all phantoms are made of too

little or too much. After Goethe, for whom Lessing had led the way, made our poet the German chronic madness, everything that was particularly good in the Elizabethan period, fruitful of many great and learned intellects, and alive with that robust popular interest in pageantry of concealed and inner meaning which had been kindled and well trained by miracle and morality plays, was, by the logic of their passion, his, as the universal Saxon, and nobody's else through any chance. The Schlegels, hereditary Shakespeareans almost, got to the edge of the truth, however, that these pieces were the work of many writers at one time, when they wished to put several more, of the many supposititious plays, to the account of the professed paid and lastly independent money-making adapter. A few more to his name and the truth would come by a *reductio ad absurdum.* One of our own *ab extra* applauders points this as a spot on their critical reputations, quite the contrary being the truer judgment. Tieck's translation of *Arden of Feversham* and others, as his also, has the same critical lesson to teach.

But, so far as they thought generally, the English themselves were upholders of the miraculous in the matter, though they cared more for the works than for the history of those or of him who made them. The delusion was rather cultivated than otherwise that a giant dramatist of this island overtopped all effort of all other men in quality and in quantity; no kind of biography for long welcomer than the one which said that nothing was really known about him. We owe it most to the Celtic mind in his own country that the dream is not still universal. The French nation never would take in for fact the mytho-

logical idea, perhaps because of national jealousy and aspiration, but much more likely because of the peculiarities of their intellect. It is clearer and quicker than that of the English *populus*, as Maurice, with all classicists, explains the word in its Roman against the Shakespearean popular use in *Coriolanus*; but it is not so strong and independent. From this it arises that the French go through the work to the workman for satisfaction, which explains the intense devotion to persons whom they think heroes that they undoubtedly have, while the English, with a comparative disregard of persons, and trust in ideals, though the opposite of this latter is said, accept whatever is offered on its own account, and find rest if possible there. In the present instance perhaps the subsequent puritanic wave of ascetic severity helped to take the workman more out of sight than what is usual. Love of law and liberty as opposed to individual heroes is undoubtedly the high national gospel by which England has kept and keeps herself safe from tyrannies of hero worship, whether of popes, kings, poets, or prose writers. She feels safe when she knows that no single man is to be wholly trusted, though she has all reverence up to that. So felt republican Athens, Thucydides and wise ostracism witnesses. Macaulay quoted Froissart once with good effect as to England's dealings in the fourteenth century with what might oppress it: '*C'est le plus périlleux peuple qui soit au monde, et plus outrageux et orgueilleux.*' It has not changed its sturdy independence. France, on the other hand, republic or not, has never yet attained the manhood that can do without personal leading. The male and female peculiarities, as they exist by nature and

education, are representative types of the peoples, and very surely the English have the blunter, the more practical, less curious, masculine, emancipated characteristics. Which national comparisons, though not applicable perhaps to individual men of genius anywhere, have true ground in fact, as will come to be seen and acknowledged more and more; for that there is an individualism of a precise kind with every nation, is one of the newer scientific considerations that politicians and thinkers are beginning to see have substantial real-ideal or personal existence. Here is the secret of ruling a crowd. The best statesman always knows his country as a man knows his friend, individually. If this instrument is vague yet, the more reason that it should be definitised by use. To the weak it is a fatal weapon, finding them out. The strong-souled general knows his army, not the individuals. For literature collective individuality has much help. If twice as great an enigma had been presented to the English as the Shakespeare of all these plays they would simply have blinked the personal riddle and enjoyed the works, ungratefully, perhaps, so far as the makers of them were concerned, but in the most flattering of all ways to the true artists, by accepting their beauties frankly. London had loved its law as represented by the house of commons before all the Stuart royal blood that ever ran, if it had wholly been gathered in one, the First Charles. The French, on the other hand, who are only now clearing themselves from the political general serfhood which too much love of persons invariably brings, are interested beyond the work to the maker; and they have a most ingenious class or kind of art, the direct produce of this loving

spirit, which becomes one with servile slave spirit in actual practice. In notorious degree our independence has kept us bare of the slaves' ingenious mechanical art hitherto; but when the flowering time of art that is the offshoot of liberty comes, it will then be seen whose is the genuine thing. In literature already the fruit of England's free deep nature is of first quality, nothing at all like it in imitative servile modish French, the appearances only now arising of better skill in the Frank land.

There is a clear kind of reality in the intellect of Gaul that is very charming, and chiefly because it has so ready an appeal to a certain state of culture, a state not a little advanced. To minds after that stage it falls flat. In philosophy this comes out as well as in art. Sociologies, exposition, criticism, and political economies are the glory of the land, as might be expected, subjects which, while nearer to everyday life, need less of intellectual power, and warmth of heart, than those peculiarly the choice of originating genius. Montaigne is perhaps the strongest, as he is the first of this order of minds, Montesquïeu, Helvetius, Condorcet, De Tocqueville, Cousin, Guizot, being the newer superficial development of one side of him, as Buckle is the English echo of the same essentially slim catering style of treating human things. When genius joined with this vein of thought, as in the cases of Rousseau, Comte, Fourier, St. Simon, the aphorism was exemplified that no Frenchman has yet had great genius, and has also commanded it. Quesnay, Turgot, and the large school of political economists, of which the Smiths and Mills are but the junior pupils, all dealing with the material side of human welfare as if a whole

problem, are what might be exactly expected side by side with the views of art prevalent. The French revolutions and military tyrannies, with their chronic recurrence to materialism pure and simple, are the consequences, on the other hand; while there is the correlative fact that medical, and physical science generally, is hotly, if in secret reality fruitlessly, pursued with ostensible success. The whole field of the national spirit and history is recognisable to great profit in such lines of thought. But this is for time and occasion other than the present.

The French are artists of a certain depth, but not very deep, however habile; and for critics, as their Proudhon, Vigny, Baudelaire, Sainte-Beuve, Gautier, and how many more clear pens, prove more lately, they are well fitted, Voltaire perhaps at a point quite representative; and when they met with our reputed dramatist, dressed in all the wild-Indian feathers of less noble thinkers than himself, they at once put their affirmative down that the object was not a man but a monster. The English typical wag's joke was long that they called the poet 'Williams,' and the least ingenious person of them might well enough retort in their own vein that this was the word to express the facts. But like themselves they nearly lost him altogether, just as they lose what the English have, the true ideal of womanhood, by their quickness, and the relative shallowness of their valuable decision, valuable in so far as that no clear critical sense could accept all these writings as the result of a single mind. To those who had not English culture of them, he was out of shape, unwieldy, like a drunken drover on horseback, not knowing which way he should next lurch,

able in some inscrutable, insular, and Britannic way, to cover difficulties, by a general system of risking, by imperturbable good-humour, mother wit, and incalculable sallies to the highest regions, a kind of parallel to his countryman Cromwell, getting to their ends by sheer autochthonic earth-born barbaric energy. To the mass of even the cultivated he was a blinded Polyphemus, whose one eye had been put out by some Οὖτις or wandering Mercury of the poetic heaven, and who ever after did not much else than throw huge random stones and roar very loudly.

To take a recent example, Taine has got perhaps as far towards understanding him as any of the traditional Frenchmen. It is possible that discipleship to Montesquieu, Guizot, De Tocqueville, Hegel, and Cousin, the philosophers of the social progress trick, the trick that is answered by the simple question, Were Homer and Moses and Christ and Mahomet and Zoroaster and Plato 'unprogressed' or uncivilised? may have put him on the back of a theory which becomes too much for him, unlike Michael Scott on his 'black steed,' and that therefore he is carried to corners of the earth that are fuller of unnatural than useful products. It would rather appear, no matter for his show of modern science Darwinian, as if he were only the best later specimen of the old national spirit with regard to this master. His syllogism seems to be: All Englishmen having come from the cold foggy low lands of continental western Europe into the similar or rather worse island of England, are gluttonous, gross, strong, violent, over affectionate, and melancholic even to chronic madness; Shakespeare was the best type of Eng-

lishman; *argal*, he was compounded of fogs, bursts of occasional light, wild melancholy, home or indoor love, savage silence and as savage speech.

This is wonderful criticism, but not altogether surprising, because we ourselves have helped towards it by fathering on the poet, as his perfection, the external methods of blood and murder appeal which alone suited the middle and lower culture of the fiercest most savage time of English history. The country had just left off bathing in fraternal, parricidal, and what other blood! There had been wars of the 'roses,' royal Thyestean murders, and burnings if possible worse than fiendish of heretics, as recent historical actual plays. It needed strong sauce to make the food of civilisation that protestantism and renaissance had discovered, palatable to such a period. Let no one be so foolish as to confound the artist, or artists even, with the necessities of popular appeal. We do not enter the calm shrine, the gently glowing but all-powerful shekinah light wherein he works, and we criticise, and often praise, what deserves only to be looked upon as practical skill of making the many turn to everyday money purpose. Our present dislike, no matter for the revivals, to these as acting plays, comes simply from the instinct of the higher general civilisation of the people. They are poor friends of the poet who do not thus discern, and of the kind men pray that they may be saved from. 'Christopher North' knew this well, and has said it; and none will accuse him of being a purist.

Taine does not do off exactly this subtle soul with his professorial gymnastics, almost music hall style, as so much

of French art and literature is, Hugo and Doré its chiefs. He is brilliant, but soon monotonous literary enough. He knows nothing of his immortal secret, and the, in his later period, sanest man that ever lived, cannot be cramped into climatic theories of lunacy, nor development theories of science. The greatest spirits have, like Melchisedec, neither father nor mother nor country, and they are kings not of madness but of peace. He might as well, perhaps better, account for Molière or Racine this way, the best French blood being either Frank or Norman, and both these races related to foggy climes.

Of all the French critics perhaps Chasles has said some of the most rational things of Shakespeare, if we except his views on *The Sonnets*. The recognition of him as 'an intense student,' for this in the most Platonic sense he was, is unusual depth of Gallic criticism, though it is very near statements that are to be taken *cum grano salis*, as, for example, that Racine is the representative artist. The thought is Voltaire's, who said that this poet needed no editing notes but points of admiration; a remark of his which ought to be applicable to all poetry or art. It may not be so questionable that Calderon's style was that of the playing easy free mind following its instincts like the butterfly the flowers. That Montaigne, trained some time by priest-hating George Buchanan the European scholar of his time, was a great master for Shakespeare, Chasles has well put; and this is the more interesting because Montaigne, in a distincter sense than Luther or Rabelais or Des Cartes, is the source of all the revolutionary doctrines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is not unlikely he helped materially the

Cromwellian rising. Certainly it is curious that the thinkers have been hunting up Germany for neologies when the Germans, in the person of Kant first, as Hume's disciple and improver, but more through Goethe, took from England their mystic transcendentalism. Montaigne was an early master of it. *Que sais-je?* was the question that began the sceptical philosophy politically, and he had not much between him and being burnt as a blasphemer then. Verily Shakespeare got into a new world when he met this wisest of Frenchmen, and Chasles, if he had noticed only this, is a pillar of fire in the night here. In a deeper sense all of them together were only re-discovering old thoughts of Greece and Rome, which had their real results in actual rule of men politically and religiously, not without sufficient revolutionary bloodshed. Such souls as Luther, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Voltaire, Diderot, Helvetius, Condorcet, D'Alembert, Rousseau, were eager and well needed soldiers, if often roughly savage, once they got weapons against the vulgar ignorant monster of young reviving Europe that believed itself the divinely commissioned in state and church to do wrong to all, if so it chose.

There is great cause for regret that our sweet artistic pure thoughted poet should have had to call at the French, and at other palaces, home and foreign, in such dress as made him look so like a Caliban. It is time for world-wide reasons that he should be relieved of the outer gatherings, whether of the green room or of the annotators, that he may be seen among his true fellows the gold-armoured Apollo he is, perfect in shape and beauty as the finest thought of the clearest Greek sculptor. Such

madness fine frenzy theories as those of Taine are only too likely to pass for coin nowadays even with ourselves. But there is quite another way of explaining genius than this rhetorical brilliant one so much admired.

With delicate feeling towards true criticism, if not very clear sight, Lamb has well said in his *Elia* that instead of wit being allied to madness, great geniuses are earth's sanest beings, and Alfred de Vigny, the French poet and novelist, has the same in the words, 'Good sense is genius itself.' One example the essayist gives in the feeling of firm ground we walk upon with Spenser when he describes Mammon in transformated places and times. The inner reality of the deepest heads and hearts is felt wherever you go with these leaders. He could not find the intellectual methods of the highest souls, but by feeling he knew how to distinguish the Bond Street and Bath lovings of everyday seemingly and reputed sane novelists, from the song that rose from human nature's inmost musical magazine of glory. The distinction he draws between great and little wits is similarly imperfect, for great wits never leave reality, while the little do, and get lost in license, darkness, fantasticism, inanity.

To Taine, the poet seems a madman, because he is too real, too cunning, too great, for his measuring mental apparatus. Land surveyors are useful, but they have not much to say to earth's real fruits. As will be seen by and bye, the poet has as scientific a head, a thousand times more than the ordinary scientific because the artistic, as he has a warm heart. Epicurus wisely had it in his table of morals that 'love of science uncontrolled by reason produces utopias': what do the utilitarians think of this

finding? Steam, as an instrument in the hands of mere men of brain, instead of making real plenty, seems, to put it mildly, doubling produce, and tripling months for it, so that utopia it is, if reason does not have the consecrating of what good is in it, and the highest reason is the musical thought of the poet. The 'mad Lear' is only a further seeing into actual existent depths that are in every nobler soul. Goethe said he never knew of a crime but that he felt that possibly it would have been as easy for him to do it as he who acted it. Indeed, the feeling is that such things of bad and good could be excelled. All men who have thought to the depths of their being know this consciousness, this entire fellowship with humanity; and never till then can they construct foundationally, create wholly sanely, be immortals whose dreams are man's highest wisdom.

After speaking of the 'hidden sanity which still guides a poet in his wildest seeming aberrations,' Lamb compares imaginative work with the actual dreams of sleep, and of them he finds the waking judgment has no good report, though it ratifies quite as violent transition in the poetic dream. He cannot tell why this should be. When reading Spenser or Shakespeare, he is as clever and talkative as Paley's traveller over the found watch, but as it is with the wide universe to which the theologian pointed, so with the free creations of deep spirits: you can see design according to your shrewdness and knowledge; you get the deeper sympathy and sight only as you rise to be, in the one case, poetic or in the noblest sense true, in the other angelic, godlike. All the great poets knew, or could have known, each other, in their

inner form; their method of building is the same at very depth. The second class, and every under class, are but wanderers in comparative darkness; to more or less degree are insane. 'It is impossible for the mind to conceive of a mad Shakespeare,' said 'Elia'; and he was wiser than he knew or could explain when he recognised this. He *does* flutter 'unconscious' doves. As well may the system of worlds be the fortuitous surgings of chance as can the high shapings of the most sincere skilful souls.

With his fatal gush, nocturnal luxuriance, and real destructiveness, though seeming love for genuine form, Swinburne, in a Hugo-minor vein, has praised poor 'Elia' as the very excellence and intolerable light of dramatic criticism. 'Elia' needs none of the superlative language of the material sublimists, of the hysterical colourists, or of the musical echoes, his spiritual if not very strong feeling and knowledge making him one of quite another world from theirs. He is not of the unrestrained school of which, by position at least, Whitman is the most easily borne with, because he is a pioneer, rough, emigrantlike, good as far as he is to be taken, namely, as tree feller. None of them need be deluded that artistry, and inner ever so much more than outer, the reverse of their method, is not the infinitely higher thing than license. Wash *versus* form is not a doubtful case. The madness in Shakespeare is of another method, as Lamb felt if he could not explain, from all eccentricities, and moving in unison with deep systems of feeling and thought, it may be, the deepest, that is, the sanest.

The average style of French later criticism, which like the chameleon has taken clearly and cleverly foreign

colours, is such as that of Mézières, whose position he tries to make a middle between the Voltairean and the German types of appreciation. He complains that neither the English nor the Germans have had sufficient respect for French post-revolutionary sympathies with the famous Saxon, and several, Chasles especially, and rightly to some extent, he puts forward as being of the true spirit. His intention is good, but the English and Germans are right, because there is only superficial sympathy, after all, induced by what others have found and said. Mézières went to the theatres to study him! Their critic poets like Vigny, Baudelaire, Gautier, and Sainte-Beuve have got furthest, but not far. Sismondi has said of the French language that though, and he might have said because, the clearest and most logical of all speech, it has not the atmosphere where musical sense can find shapes. Its poetry may be finely drafted, as to design of the logical type, but there is no or little musical complexion, blood-filled beautiful tissue, its ornament and colour being external, not of the inmost heart. Coleridge says the French lost their poetical language by refining as far from natural plain terms as they could, and he notices Blanco White's similar remark as to Spanish. It is Byron who has hit hardest, no matter that the French have found themselves rather akin to him in a certain theatrical posturing which is the secret of Byronic well enough deserved fame:

> 'Creaking lyre,
> That whetstone of the teeth—monotony in wire!'

Till France have a one deeply original poet, and have his unfettered pedant-destroying rich mysterious language to

renew from superficiality, till the French, always excepting the men of first genius, are other than they are, perhaps they cannot see, not to say enjoy what is best in Shakespeare. They, and we nowadays in some degree, forget that young words have most life. Mézières shakes hands with some unknown Edinburgh critic on the point that Ulrici, Gervinus, Kreyssig, and others, Germans and English, the calmest of them, see things that never were in the plays; but there is a Scotch dryness not a little like the French clear brilliancy, if this anonymous representative be or be not allowed. Common sense philosophy, like the eclectic, as the best of the Scots themselves now begin to see, may turn out to be the foolishness that is of all kinds the most ridiculous, the sapient. Delightful crystal shallow reading the French critic is, and the destructive *Académie Française* acted quite in its apollyonic character in having the lucid book *couronné*, but to those who care for art the volume is about as useless, except for introduction of the elementary kind, as most other French discussions of the English drama. In spite of his main purpose his foreign reading has, however, made him doubtful of his medium method, with regard to what he calls the romantic plays. Goethe used to laugh at the dancing of the critics with the words 'classic' and 'romantic,' which he never meant to mean much when he used them. Mézières cannot keep his own position or take that of any other in dealing with *The Dream of Midsummer Night* or *The Tempest*. He has not risen much above the traditional Gallic treatment of English drama.

Those of the Parisian romantic period, just as of the

German similar *Sturm und Drang* time, which began properly with Goethe and his set's foaming Hamletic recitations over inn tables, made one little mistake when they claimed Shakespeare as their master. He knows nothing of their deliberate licentious search after violent expression to the intended destruction of beautiful and finding of unnatural early-savage form. Pater has accepted from Sainte-Beuve the classic and romantic divisions, but he cannot fix them, for the very good reason, as Goethe and Schiller knew, that there is no real distinction of the kind. They are merely popular watchwords. Some sort of conservative and liberal position in art Pater tries to get for them, the romantic leading the way, the classic looking back. But this will not do. Instead of getting into Shakespeare's world by romanticism it is the road quite in the opposite direction. What is called romanticism is merely immaturity or fantasticism when it is not the worst of all things in art, revolutionary license. A piece of genuinely actual romantic art like Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, a higher kind of child's bogy in the dark, never will become classical, as wine gets good, by age. The classic is the truly beautiful if it has any meaning, and the promising romantic is but product of imperfect artists, while the destructive romantic, as not a little of Rubens and Hugo and nearly all of Doré, is the product of inferior souls not having the modesty and hidden strength of the artists who do most for their fellows towards shaping their lives to beauty. The true classic never looks back nor forward; his creation is out of eternity: the romantic is a self-ruled exhibitory dramatic grotesque artisan; and it depends on whether more light,

with therefore less picturesque but more beautiful walking, be given him, if he is to become the artist, the classic. The criticism of Shakespeare which came from the nightmare dream that romanticism meant highest art was worthless. We have more than enough of superficial distinctions that have no artistic facts under them without adding these to slim renaissances and greater futilities. If you look at them steadily they vanish. The actual cause of battle was whether the dramatic was higher than the epical, a Rubens than a Raphael. Weak heads were puzzled with 'classic' and 'romantic,' and got lost.

There is with some critics, of whom Coleridge is an instance, a precise way of looking on all these plays as essentially by the one writer. They take their stand on the statements that he is the first dramatist, and that he is the first poet also, without doubting that the two things may not be possible. The parts used in the works, by being thoroughly transformed, become his own, so that he is the veritable author of all. Even the difficulties in the internal composition have had their explanations tending to the same conclusion. The long serpentine passages, which to some eyes look like Joseph's coat of many colours, they find were the result of the following and groping and aspiring of one adventurous spirit, omnipotent self-reliant argus-eyed, the sentences, like series of waves, rising higher and higher to large fullnesses, culminating climaxes, and rounding down to breathless closes of paragraphic speeches. This is worshipful enough of human ability, and in such line it might also plausibly be said that, true to inspirations, and pushing cowardices aside which very busy critics are now apt to cause,

effort that is original cramped or destroyed, he got at last into the full riches of thought and language, and that hence all these incalculably precious growths issued, as if they were fruit from another planet. But these dreams are not the kind on which to depend. If he did get into some mysterious hill of culture, his proper genius would not have left him in the dramatic mines, but would have passed him out at the other side of so formless, or only mechanically formed, dangerous, and doubtful a region of gold. Here is his highest palace, the supreme light of his kingdom, however, to this class of universalists. For the dramatic treasure dug for the oppidan people generally, who so much need relief of colour, and reminding that there is glory in nature, no wise heart is unthankful, by whomsoever done; but the seers know that this kind of plenty can be as deadly in the spiritual world as is indiscriminately gathered and ill arranged harvest of the dangerous metal in the everyday one. Bohemian alchemy has doubtful mints. If their ideal of him is that he is the nonpareil simply because of being a greatest dramatist, and if substantially that which the popular unenlightened or at least uncritical mind calls his work they also think his, it cannot be the ideal of any thinking or actually working higher artist, of whatever country, if he is true and faithful, by knowledge and action, to the invariable lines of high art. As against Aristotle and all his disciples on this point two examples would prove the relative position of the drama to the higher poetry. Let Macbeth's dramatically powerful vision of the spirits of the future kings of Scotland be compared with the vision Anchises pointed out to Æneas on the banks of Lethe of the spirits

waiting for incarnation in the future heroes and kings of Rome, and clear ideas of precedence will come, both workmen being in the cases equal to their spheres. In quite another than the dramatic field must we find the substance of this whom his contemporary Meres calls 'mellifluous and honey-tongued spirit,' terms peculiarly antagonistic to the general conception now of the kind of man he was, the honey in him seeming Corsican; and it is not by indiscriminate praise and assumption of herculean impossibilities, but by appreciation of the real exact knowledge which we have, that we shall succeed in knowing him in the way that will be of use to us, either as ourselves producers, or as needing elevation of soul for our higher living. When his proportions become human he will not be the less but the more divine.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DRAMA AND THE EPICIST.

WERE it not that the purpose of all criticism is, if doing its proper work, simply an introductory one, the end of which should be to lead to deeper study of its subject on broader lines of thought, there might appear to be delay in getting to very close considerations. But to meet with a great poet in his best work needs a *praeparatio* rather of suggestive width of thought than any word-mongering, or overflow of antiquarian and chronological matter. To tell such truth, among other necessities, skilled workers have made islands of Bohemia, put horns on lawgivers, written indifferent language titles to choice pictures, and done many similar wonderful but highly artistic things, so often looking like caprice or ignorance. The laws of freedom here are not the conventional ones, or at least they will not, as is thus shown, allow themselves to be ruled by the lower. It will be with such freer guidance that the road must be led by and bye to the fair palace of one far higher than the admired dramatist, namely, the epic poet.

If Shakespeare had been still more learned in the literature of the past, if he had not been held back at his ripe period by the wants common to those whose silver

spoons are not by luck or birth well known oral prerogative, he would have burst the dramatic shell which gathered about him, too much to the hurt of his better genius, long before he really did. Akin it is to so much that happens to those in the world of poetic gift, that clouds of bad fortune, most of all, the purely literary ones, should have kept this sun from a shining which might have reached man's perfect day. We must submit to understand and regret that the meagreness of his knowledge as a scholar, wide reader though it is possible but not so probable he may have been, has lost for us the powers of originally perhaps the most seeing soul; not lost certainly altogether, but to too large extent, when such gift is so rare in the centuries. This is not implication of anything more than that he stands not higher in many respects than less powerful souls. Quality certainly is of first importance, but fullness and wealth are proper attendants to genuine virtue. Humanity, in the persons of its elect ones, should not take the valley level, and build pyramids of untried materials thence; it ought to examine, and resume, when possible, the work of civilisation where the sovran dead left it, if there is ever to be any chance of taking heaven by the sweet artistic violence of purest love. We may see a man's sheer original strength by his building on a solitary system his world poem, yet weakness cannot but appear where no deep acquaintance exists with the previous cunning workmen in the special sphere where such works have been done. To far grander effort than dramatic does the regret at want and inefficiency of such element apply. In the dramas there is never the clear rise to the highest artistic single-souled full con-

sciousness of the beauty which is infinite. When we come to the two pieces wrongly called dramas, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, the former being the correlative or forerunner to the latter, it is here we get the height of the poet's faculty, and it is here we find limited knowledge beside unrivalled artistic ability. On these two does his rank as a divine or world poet depend; and that his mind had not a richer furnishing from the past is the sole reason that he is not yet the perfect arrival at the fullest dream of humanity. As it is, these works of highest art are outlined with the absolutely firm hand, but they are not filled in to their capacity of carrying the rich adornments of chaste yet voluptuous dress. Speaking of his works generally, his 'small Latin and less Greek,' though it is discussed whether he must not have known the difficult Latin of Plautus, little French, and likely no Italian or other foreign literature, Aristotle and Milo quite ancient heroes to his Ulysses, with many a slip besides, as Dennis the critic was too fond of showing, gave him poor choice and comparison of architectural construction. What has been said of Calderon, that he mixed events on purpose to show that poetry is above time and place, just as Virgil makes Dido meet Æneas by eliminating a few hundred years, could not cover the curious mixtures of the Englishman, it is pretty clear, though there is wise criticism in the thought that his absolute idealisation of places and times, completely makes irrelevant the confined prosy but truly dramatic doctrines of the unities.

However paradoxical it may seem, the truth is that never could he through his whole life trust art of his own sole invention. He began work as an intensely appre-

ciative paraphrast or commentator in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and only in *The Tempest* did he nearly escape from the conventional art of his time into clear trust of his own originality. Not having the complete field of comparison the fullest culture gives, he clung to the narrower shapes and readymade moulds of the period, poor substitutes for the insight he should have had from knowing, say, one great Greek. For mercantile use they did well; it is for higher things that it is pity these arts of extorting money did not fade to him for the light of true shape. It is strange indeed to see so strong a soul looking to the pure poetic heaven through the narrow quaint savage windows of those old playwrights. Perhaps the hypothesis of the innocence of genius accounts for such contentment, if contentment it was, and not destiny. After recognising greatly the worthiest field of work he could not rid himself of exits and entrances, nor of such a commonplace thing as a storm at the Bermudas, described in a trumpery book of his day. At the last, there was one line of limit to the grandest epic freedom with this powerful man. His originality is not actually embodied to perfection in the final and trained result of the energy of the highest poet of word and deed. Why he must not claim precedence over all others is to be found in this sphere of thought. The closeness of embrace of his intellectual love is that wherein his power is yet unmatched. An enemy expressed the fact by saying that he thought himself 'the only Shakescene in a country to bombast out a blank verse,' very well aware where his successful rival's power lay. His plots, when he makes a change from what is in the story he takes, are all of the

sudden temporary nature; and if they have a certain freshness of impulse, they have that, as all amateurish work has it, by reason of feminity or immature manhood of gift and acquirement.

Who does not see that the English, if giants in energy of feeling, are children yet in poetic construction? Our language is not past its literary blossom towards fruit of finest shape. Wilson, the somewhat, to present eyes, absurd, if not ridiculous, almost braggart, bombastic, and certainly very diffuse 'Christopher North,' yet of undeniable poetic appreciation, after a long search through our poetry, hurriedly allows *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Lear* to be great poems, but his heart evidently does not follow his words, which is easily seen by the eagerness of his last grasp, as if for salvation from the entire vacancy of the highest poetic sphere in the language, that *Paradise Lost* was the one *Great Poem* of England. Carlyle's theory that Shakespeare is the highest of our poets because the most unconscious, and Milton of far less calibre because continually conscious, blows up this rock of Wilson's out of the sea altogether, so that there is nothing for his foot to rest on. But on the theory that Shakespeare, though not in the poems of his Wilson hurriedly called great, but in his best work, is like Dante, supremely conscious, and Milton by no means so intellectually fixed as to what he had to do, the true test of the superiority of the former to the latter, there is still poorer ground for the hope that *Paradise Lost* was the thing wanted. Wordsworthian though Wilson, to his honour and fame, showed himself, *The Excursion* he knew to be amorphous, however deep and true at flashes.

Milton, strong artist, especially as his youth gave signs of, is not the finished poet in the sense that Dante is, or that Shakespeare is in less degree than the Italian.

Hamerton has risked the opinion that Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and others, were amateurs. In a sense it is true with this our strongest man. The complete skill of intense manipulation, grounded on a large choice, on width of experience, on calm and breadth of cultivated brain, is not there to the fullest extent. The free mixing of his soul with the divine beauty, where plot is not of supreme consideration, is that in which his glory of gift truly effulges. Thirty years and more ago, Arnold, while clearly stating the first requirements with the Greek masters in the art of poetry, showed how the form is the essential part, and that only severe cultivation can give it. The remnants of small bulk we have of Greek poets, particularly of the dramatists, are apt to magnify our Elizabethan men unduly, for size has an undoubted effect on all imaginations, even the sharpest. We should have better grounds of comparison if we had all the *Hamlets* and *Othellos* of, say, Sophocles or Euripides, as to what culture really was in Greece and England at their dramatic hitherto greatest points. There is a famous future here yet before English culture if the nation be true to its destinies. As the idea of a nation grows to honest maturity its language does, and the immortal luck is if some master soul fix the high tide of the language with great embodiment. By and bye art will have more graceful and surer lines, with fuller substance, than it has now, or in the past has had. Very much later, Arnold's clearness has said that the comparative weakness of

Byron, Coleridge, Shelley, and Wordsworth, is to be ascribed simply to haste, weakness, or indolence that could not or would not master shape, leaving their works masses of mere felicitous expression. Keats, but not so happily, he, with quaintly unsteady faculty, thinks the most glaring instance of this, though from the very excusable reason, the impetuous inspiration of immaturity. Of Shakespeare he also says: 'These excellences, the fundamental excellences of poetical art, Shakespeare no doubt possessed them, possessed many of them in a high degree, but it may perhaps be doubted whether even he himself did not give scope to his faculty of expression to the prejudice of a higher poetical duty.'

This is partial, but true sight so far as it goes, and it is the more fruitful of thought because the finding of one who wrongly holds the dramatic to be the highest sphere of poetic excellence. The meaning of the flow of words is simply that the art of the playwright was too weak for the energies of a higher poetic influence. The want of culture of the classic kind was the cause of much unshapeliness, though popular condition and demands conspired with that. The religious and secular drama were mixed without discrimination. A man may know as much as another, the one using no books to help him: but it is not the much that is the essential; it is the quality of what you are familiar with that is vital for one. If you read all the dusty plays of all the old book shops, you might not get as much culture from them as from one of the many Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides wrote.

Shakespeare's distinctly theatrical work (not excepting the brokenly poetic *As You Like It*, mainly taken from

the novel by Lodge, *Rosalynde*: *Euphue's Legacie*, nor the partially lovely *Cymbeline*) is only the manufacture from general collected matter, as Malone, Steevens, and others have iterated to weariness, by the most skilful playwright, of popular art, having no higher aim than passing entertainment, its appeal being properly to the single commonplace prosaic mind in its moods of relaxation. Arnold did not see that expression is the prime necessity of the real drama, as of all social everyday appeal; form begins to assert the higher place only when human feeling and thought rise to religious drama and epical glory.

Dramatic art is of similar dignity with that of public speaking, which are ever, when at their best, a coming down, as best poetry is the facing neither solely upward nor downward, but perpendicularly, like the human countenance divine. They have similar faults of exaggeration, loose expression, and tendencies to rouse ignorant and part ignorant, consequently fanatical mob madnesses. Indeed, is not speech to its highest expression in music, the true correlative to hearing, the active and the passive for each other, and by the nature of the case, must they not, Wagner on music nevertheless, be in dignity infinitely below the wonderful communion of soul to soul by the symbols of silent words, that have such clearness and stability, yet so little dependence on material media or instruments? The study is the scene of highest poetic delight, the shut closet, as against his mechanical objective nature Aristotle had to confess, when preaching the superiority of tragedy to the epic, thus answering himself quickly and effectively. The

Greeks, as the inventors of the drama, loved it, but did not know its bare ultimate nature, it being with them epical, because so closely related to the gods. Their genius rather jumped society's life from the lyric ode to epic grandeur. Rousseau, in his *Lettre à M. d'Alembert*, condemning theatricals, has shown that not only the Romans, but many other nations, took opposite ground from them, making actors infamous, their own greatest thinker, Plato, obscurely prophesying the very same truth. Jeremy Collier has Xenophon, Seneca, Augustine, a whole phalanx of authorities, against the theatre, but he was committed, being of the split opposition high house.

Not in either the dramatic or the oratorical boisterous diffuse and unfinished provinces does the goddess of beauty build her temple wherein to dwell: her visits thither are of the flying angelic kind. It is not a little instructive that Spalding pleads anxiously for ordinary drama, as really deserving a place in poetry. Schiller's distinction, if philosophical or not to the last degree, applies usefully here between agreeable and high art, when he denies descriptive poetry like Matthisson's, or as, in this country, we might say Thomson's, a true place in the kingdom of beauty, as he denies landscape, which is England's poor boast with the brush, a first place in painting, quite justly. There are selection and symbolism no doubt in descriptive poetry and landscape painting; but too much reality cramps artistic freedom, and the stirring of soul that comes from all symbolic message is of the rougher kind effective with only the rougher spirits. There is vague union with Pan or the divine in the love of landscape, but colour and form are cruder symbols to

keep the quiet bowers for us than sound and word. The common drama holds even a still more realistic position.

To say, therefore, that poetry of the highest class and fame has never been addressed with the bare sole appeal which is natural to merely agreeable art, is to state a truth that the wider, fuller, the more silently intense one's study is, grows ever the stronger and clearer. He who recognises fully the best work of the maker of *The Tempest* has trouble with no feature more than with the singleness, hardness, and brokenness which the dramatic necessities forced on thoughts ever ready to bloom into the living finely textured complexional flush of universal poetry. Justly with regard to everyday single drama, Schröder, the famous Shakespearean manager of the Hamburg theatre, denied metre to be really dramatic. The nature of the effect of this harsh mastery of the necessities of popular appeal, can be hinted at by the comparison of a garish stage picture with the finished suggestive softness of an oil painting of genius in open daylight.

Not at all a rash but a safe statement is it that Sydney Smith's *bon mot* would have applied to the poet in his long dramatic career, 'the round man in the square hole.' It is probable that accident or necessity had sent him for a livelihood behind the stage, or at all events one of them kept him there longer than he wished, and as he had extraordinary ability, he succeeded, it may be far too well, but he is of quite higher stamp than dramatist, and it was not much less than a world's misfortune, perhaps it was one of its greatest ones, that he was not either kept entirely away from the poor mimings of the

London roofless Globe, or had not the luck of escaping it sooner than he did. This, without forgetting the vast influence his actual work there has already had, and yet will have, on the world. But for the purposes of acting and display to the eyes and ears, his subtler thoughts added to the dull poetical matter of other minds, are ineffective, and all but lost, because it is only in the calm of the study that we can hear the real music of his soul welling now and again through them. He has been another example, practical though he was, of the deep moral that it is unwise to throw pearls about. Were it not that the men of the closet ever make invasions in his favour, charmed as they are with him as their civilising musical Apollo, on the popular crowds, whose appetites need still in these days far plainer fare, the puzzle of his wavering and curiously changeful popularity, theatrically, had been solved by silence and darkness of the scenery. His transformation out of this ragged gloom would have been long ago but for half seeing friends, from whom he might well wish to be preserved, to a seat beside Dante and the other archpriests with whom the elect spirits alone hold full converse, converse not selfish but for the best good of all, to the lowest unit of our race, according to due capacity and natural rank.

We may have nine day wonders of enthusiastic acting, ay, by accidental, mechanical, pamphlet, and press forces, the fashionable hundred ones, in so wide a Babylon to so narrow an earth as this is becoming: but it will take a golden age to keep up the crowd to so rare feasting of reason as even these shreddings from higher spheres are; while, as to the influence of displaying the vilest plots to

minds that cannot see the poetry, it is the direct lead to the nadir of civilisation. The accidents of a roof and fuller spangles do not change if they better the nature of the gipsy outcasts of the market places. Soon enough, after these fitful fevers, the smallest theatre will suffice for all the sympathisers with him from the wide world. Our Macreadys, Keans, and Irvings, despite generous glimpses they get, and try to give, of the brightness, are too often but the monsters conjured by the exacting spirit of sensational novelty, of idle gape-culture. Who are sadder men at heart than they, if Macready's confession can be taken, which is very likely indeed, as representative? Their high art is nerve stretching, a kind of spiritual melodramaticism, that is, art founded on detached accidental grief or joy, galvanic alarming exciting, as are the automatic movements of Poe's dead men. Over and beyond home signs of deep mistake, foreign foolishness of Shakespearean representation here is sacrilege pure and simple. A foreigner's translations are useful, to foreigners; his criticism may be endurable generally: his personal embodiment of our art is as impertinent or ignorant as it ever will be detestable and destructive. The histrionic art, even of those born to the language of Shakespeare, is not of the living soul, reading meanings into these mixed plays being an unprofitable employment for actor as for hearer. Its representations are like destructive burstings of some Sheffield dam. True art of poetry or *action* is a never wearied flow from the perfect seven fountains of the inner secret lands of love, which, through the cycles, gives life to the millions, from the sage to the children. But this is of another region than the gaseous.

The latest English celebrity of histrionic work does, however, know what 'motley to the view' means. In one of his lectures he has shown that he is intellectually altogether higher than his part. His words have wisdom, quite stronger than those of mincing, when he explains that the true field of dramatic beneficence is among the lower middle class and the mob. This is rare recognition, and the bishop is in the right who sees that such a man is no shadow, but of genuine possible usefulness.

The best poetic beauty cannot be put behind the footlights, however willingly we would raise the influence of mimicking representation. When Garrick, who really had some poetry in his soul despite Lamb's just horror at him being turned with Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey rhyme, tried to put *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before an audience, the result was, as of necessity it must at all times be, if the play be left to itself, in Reed's words: 'The spectators were uncommonly few, and therefore not in the best humour. Respect for Shakespeare, however, kept them silent, but that silence, likewise, induced them to sympathise with Lysander and Helena, Demetrius and Hermia, who in one scene are all lying fast asleep on the stage.' The piece was only acted once in that period. The same result has often enough followed representing its companion *The Tempest*. It will by and bye be no wonder that this is the case. Not Reynolds nor Mrs. Stowe could enjoy Raphael. As well might you expect a ploughman, fresh out of the fields, to take Paganini's fiddle and play Paganini's music with Paganini's power and success, as expect an indiscriminate audience to see through and appreciate such

poetry. Its plot, O shade of Sheridan, can be insinuated only into the brain boxes of the real 'upper ten.'

That Shakespeare ever assisted at or advised representing these pieces is either a proof of his innocent modest greatness, or perhaps he thought of experimenting as to pleasing the people by the merely external display of inner mystery. These pieces are not of the stage; they are sights and shows for the soul's eye in the silent light of contemplation. His entanglement so long with the secondary thoughts and common art of others, of a different sphere from what he was, has been a source of confusion to himself, to the many, and, what is very curious, to the few and cultivated also. So great a mind has alone by itself, through mixing so unreservedly with the gipsy maunderings, given an undue prominence to the merely secular theatre, the holiday place of oppidans, who are ever ready to become, in the words of Tacitus, *plebs sordida et circo ac theatris sueta.* Their muse is the prodigal of the art sisters, if she is of them at all, and not a wild foundling. Though the instinct of the higher minds recognises practically her nature, and the character of her influence, by keeping apart from the theatre, only the veriest handful of the intellectual people of this time of general civilisation caring about its dissipations, yet by the figure of this deep soul seemingly protecting enthusiastically the wanton, they are lost as to the rights of the matter. 'What has poetry to do with a play?' grumbled Byron. And who does not remember how cleverly the dramatic position is put in *Aurora Leigh?*

Such poets as degrade, by the necessity of the case, their own and others' humanity in this destructive though,

as men and towns are, absolutely necessary region, were those whom Plato's powerful depth of sight condemned to be put out of his perfect state, the ideal republic; the mere amusers and encouragers of the idle and thoughtless, the fabulists who hated the truth, not the Homeric scientific philosophic imagining seers. The assumption of equality was scientifically well founded on the part of the Punch and Judy man who meeting Mario, the famed tenor, coming out of an opera house said, 'How is trade with you? it is very dull with me.' In large growing states, however, it were intolerance of the worst kind not to see the smaller uses of the theatre, as outlet for the humours of the ignorant stone-prisoned citizens, whose hearts long for nature's colour in the country's free theatre, and whose melancholy, showing itself in angers, perhaps crimes, needs artificial smoothing. For the barbaric sincerity, in bad as well as good, of rustic hearts, it has at least the lessons of tolerance, mystery, and awe. At the same time, let it not be forgotten that the theatre is no more than a dangerous stimulant that can be medicinal only to certain histories and cultures. A doctor knows that poison can be life in some circumstances. Far less skill than Shakespeare had would have suited better in such a sphere. Intellectual and religious men, who cannot but see the world of good that is ever showing itself through the dramatic spangles with which he far too long and much disfigured himself, have been unable to separate the gold with skilled toil from the clay bed into which force of accident likely drove, or at all events kept it; and they have refrained too timidly from putting the unreligious or real drama in its proper

place, as a bastard kind of art for the empty headed, for the unspiritual, the unimaginative, those of nature's stamping or of civil manufacture, for souls whose eyes and ears are acuter than their brains, their senses ever so much more educated than their thought.

Why have we not understood Ben Jonson's promethean cry of the heart against the Jupiter he so long, in his days of ignorance and carelessness for men, worshipped?

> 'Come leave the loathed stage,
> And the more loathsome age;
> Where pride and impudence, in faction knit,
> Usurp the chair of wit!
> Inditing and arraigning every day,
> Something they call a play.
> . . .
> Leave things so prostitute,
> And take the Alcæic lute. . . .'

A secondary man, he also was wandering only through the darkness of the young nation's crude culture. Yet the Alcæic is quite a common lute to the Homeric. And cannot we guess the right reason of the chronic necessity of lord chamberlains, with, at intervals, denouncing piqued Jeremy Colliers compiling learned warnings such as the *Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage?* If good hearts are entrapped, as they numerously are, into its miming, and for this cause essentially profligate, mockery, all the better and safer for the theatre; and it needs help of this kind for actual use of society: but it is bad for a born son if he dwells so long there as to begin to be satisfied with the enchanted swine's

husks that will become surely disenchanted as in Ben's case and that of many another.

> 'Disgracing
> With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
> Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
> The name of Agincourt,'

if it be possible to disgrace at all the brutality of battle, is barely enough supported by the addition,

> 'Yet sit and see,
> Minding true things by what their mockeries be.'

Unless it can be shown, as might well be wished, that our fortunate period is at that happiest national stage of growth when all things become religious, when churches merge into daily fact, and clearest art comes out of the Periclean unity, it is little if at all less than monstrous to see bishops, ministers, and professors, praising up theatrical work built on the merely divisional secular basis, as of the highest importance. That the theatre as it is, is of social value, may be as undoubted as that the scaffold is, but that it has any right to first place, as guide to society that admits of distinction between sacred and profane, can be negatived most absolutely. If there be complete religious combination of all ceremony, then the theatre might get new dignity; if the church and state thoughts should unite into one, all this praise would be right: but, while protestantism has, like a wedge, separated all religious attempt from secular, it is nothing but blindness for prophetic spirits to fall on their knees before the Baal of naked secularism which the theatre confessedly at present is. There ever occurs in states, as in individuals, this division. First there is the unity of inno-

cence; then the fall, or knowledge of good and evil, which makes to the individual his spasmodic period, to the states their separation of church and state, of religion and fact; and, God helping, to some there comes the vision of wisdom again, which unites knowledge and love in the individual, religion and fact, church and state, so far as society is concerned. But it is from the new thought of epic souls that the only religious drama or valuable ritualism can come. The reformation is not, as bishops and professors think, from beneath upward, but from the heights downward. All the drama we have had for generations is but bastard, because of its mean superficial secularity, and nothing will raise healthy water out of such a well. Only under the unity of the theocratic or rather the ideal-real state, the highest attainable human height in history as in art, can the acted drama be without drawbacks. Then it is at once secular and sacred, with life a whole cured paradisaic substantial existence.

The intellectual guides should have discerned clearly. Lower minds may have to stay in this region of symbolising as the limit of their ability; but Shakespeare got beyond it, the guides should have pointed out. In higher ground, the religious theatricality of the churches which takes the name of ritualism, is a similar though much nobler necessary evil, that needs continual check. The few purest strongest spirits that are consciously united with the one will, but only they, need no rough sensual symbolic incitements of this, in great measure useful to the many, though also dangerous, kind, for the highest attainment and equipment for action to the soul. A Milton or a Shakespeare, though such as they alone, if

indeed they secured their manhoods, need for personal good go to no theatres of symbolism, profane or sacred, even those of clear speech; they are themselves earth's purest light. The comparative darkness they would have by such haunting merely troubles their own visions of purity. After they have gained the possession of their souls they should trust their inner light and make from patterns they see in their mount for the people. Men should have felt that this spirit did not belong to the common drama but by reason of his darkness, and perhaps of his unconsciousness, which is sometimes a characteristic of much strength. Properly he was one of the complete men, one of the makers of his time for all time, the worthy fellow of the later Englishman who by darkness and accidents of other kind, in a period of controversy, war, and fanaticism, came perhaps to greater grief in not securing fully the rights of his birth in the kingdom of art.

There is nothing so painful as to see a strong-winged soul forced to fly in a narrow degrading space, though there he will do nearly, perhaps the best that can be done. The consciousness of something better, however, generally forces him to monstrosities, to ungainly strong rushings, over powerful for the defined limits; yet gates to glory open from Gehenna itself to the divine souls. But the picture is a common one in the world's history. The true bent of genius followed in freedom, other and transcending work had taken the place of many of these undoubtedly great but to their artist sadly cramping dramas.

Let no one say who has long read carefully and sym-

pathetically his work from *Venus and Adonis* to *The Tempest*, that the painful dramatic period to this royal soul was not a wandering in the wilderness, his true star clouded except but at stolen intervals through years and years. The slime, quip and crank, conceit and fun, which the time (the time of the bear gardens and of the licensed 'banks,' 'The Cardinal's Hat' said to be hetairean house for the clergy, as hell must have been the laity's) which the circumstances, and which the profession demanded, were mainly, there is little doubt, from noisier shallower brains than his; they were not native to the clear depths of his genius.

'One of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the players, for the gratification of the many?' Wordsworth thought so of the matter; and if a stronger moral nature than his parsonlike lesson-searching devoted one might judge the necessities of time and place in an imperfect world as requiring some freedom, still, he is nearer the fact very likely than professed critics of this state of matters. Feeling is often a surer guide to truth than dry knowledge. There are short paths, royal roads, for the truly poetic spirits to visit each other. The secrets of each

are with the other more than less tactual constitutions can understand.

Close to these thoughts it might be discovered that the genuine hatred of the highest minds of the present, our highest time of civilisation yet, to the public representation of these plays, with their crude and often brutal motives and incidents, is well founded. What man or woman of sense, really having our purer culture, can enjoy the bringing before all ages of such phrasing and intrigue as for example *Othello* has? The very turning point of *Macbeth*, whether foisted in by the players or by a judicious playwright to suit his audiences, not to speak of Lady Macbeth's billingsgate, or worse; surely the day is over for such brutality, once undoubtedly more civilised than it is now. All this without any ridiculous pedantic purism, for to the study of the learned these plays have values of essential historic permanent kind. It may be, however, that there ever remain minds only thus to be enlightened. If the dramatist's day is over it is probably because the poet's is now arriving. The 'comic people,' not a hundred years ago, accused tragedians of transcendent genius of lowering dreadfully the morals and civilisation of the nation, by making murders and adulteries heroic. The easy path of imitation, was the strong phrase of the prophet or prophets from this unexpected Galilee. Such rather outrageous accusations would have true grounds had the nation been largely a theatre going one; as it is, the deterioration of those who do go is not sudden, because nothing is unfamiliar to many of them. Did we have a reformed theatre, in which less experienced and more

cultured minds might wish seats, it would be found that the Elizabethan drama is not the perfect glove for the hand of most Victorians. The one drawback is that nowhere else is so much popular poetic elevation or purging of the passions of the soul, as Aristotle has it, to be yet obtained as from these mixed plays. If it is true, which surely it is not, that the popular culture now is at the same height as then, nothing can be better than they. Perhaps our veneration for them, caused by the weak interregnum of the period at the middle of which Anne presided, may be a mistake. They were improved and re-improved in the Elizabethan days freely, but in the presence of Shakespeare as he left them we seem to have lost faith in all other humanity. Not much wonder either. Drydenic improvements have been unfortunate things in the extreme, but chiefly because they meddled with what were not plays, but Shakespeare's own sole perfect pieces of poetry. The truer way is to keep for the study what is now surely unfitted for popular healthful benefit. It may be that this is the only present legitimate method. Changing slowly, if at all, we must not, however, be too sanguine as to popular progress.

Potboilers his perfecting of these dramas were, not the labours of his love; and the poetry of the highest order, which rises frequently to the surface in them, comes by opposition rather than encouragement, for it has no proper standing in the dramatic sphere, according to the wise art which ever aims at the centre of its object. The constraint which he could not escape keeps the hard harsh sound of the didactic understanding

ever destroying the sweeter accidental, or, rather, the natural notes.

It was no wrong critical instinct that kept the French battling against Shakespeare's nondescript plays violating unities. They could not see that the fault was a confusion of the religious and real drama, of epicism and everyday intrigue, of what in comparison with the spiritual may be called the prose life. The cause of the many controversies about his art of mixing humorous and scurrilous scenes with the tragic, is simply that the real drama was conquering the ideal or religious drama. Yet all kind art must have its Silenuses and fauns for protection to the ugly and the growing. 'Christopher North' asks what effect a ridiculous interspersed scene would have upon a Greek audience hearing the heroic soul-stirring religious works of their great three. They would likely do as another audience once did: call out for two hours, 'Great is Minerva of Athens!' The restraint Arnold admires can be seen any Sunday. Dare a man sing a music hall song in church to enhance contrasts? Aristophanes was the rebel that hewed down religion to a block for the Greeks, just as Charles I. to the English and Louis XV. to the French destroyed monarchy, and not the Cromwells and Mirabeaus. It was fatefully that he stood up against the irreverent destructive science of Socrates, the puritan, the jacobin of philosophy, the agnostic, the art-hating ancient Rousseau savage, whom Cato wisely enough, as a statesman or people's friend careful for all necessities of lives at different ages and stages, did not approve. If cynicism and science are too much for religion, at certain periods of a national history, the decline

and fall have their beginning then. Our less noble impulses are ever inclined to embrace the dull thing we imagine falsely is reality. It may call itself common sense, or intense sincerity, but it swiftly becomes hypocrisy, sham, nasality, evangelism, cant. In our own religious drama of the pulpit, the choir or chorus practically the same thing as in the highest drama of Greece if we could see through some externals and accidentals, have we not the thin end of the wedge striving to enter? Spurgeons, Dawsons, and Alexanders have invited laughter as a fit element into divine moments or periods of worship; and for poor general human nature the *descensus Averni* is particularly facile in this way. The crowds would follow, but the elevated would be sifted out for the many's loss, and for ultimate national ruin. So Shakespeare in his darkness laughed with fearfully riotous effect; but he found clearer objects to strive towards; though he never got quite out of the region of low realism, what deserves to be called vulgarism by complete accuracy. The born poet, not mere writer, Goethe, was nearly lost on this same rock, certainly crippled to science's crutches. Wilson has said truth about all the Elizabethans when he held that none of them are for a highly civilised people, their work being, in the real and artistic sense, immodest, that is, unshapely work, Shakespeare's barely passing his scrutiny for the general crowd itself, whose perceptions are still crude, if less so by far than in Elizabeth's time.

Forced effort is spoiled effort in these spheres to infinite extent. When Scott, like a Prometheus, with the spike of debt driven through him, wrote for bread and a house over his head, the everyday discord of utility

became the barrier over which the lovely fays of high sentiment, thought, and imagination, could clamber only with the greatest difficulty at rare intervals. The free delight of genius following its own paths is only in his earlier work. But it is said, though with questionable wisdom, that such men thus forced give us more than might otherwise come, for innocent minds of the highest temper are apt to be too much contented with the inner workings of their own thoughts, and care not to realise, realisation having something charlatanic always in the result. Quality, however, in these matters is infinitely above quantity, as theologians know in judging or thinking of christian life and effort. So much so that two or three lines of imaginative work could be taken from *The Tempest* worth more than all *Macbeth*; and *Macbeth* is chosen because it is the play of all those Shakespeare finished which most nearly, in its general aspects, occupies the directly dramatic province. Pages of *Waverley* are of more value than whole volumes of the Scott literature written in accordance with the world's commonplace notions of honour, to get mere material position preserved. The heroic spirits of first quality are true to their birth as they can be; and the immense difference between these two men, in this respect, is that the dramatist when he discovered that the theatre was not his fullest measure, left it, whereas the other's genius failed him, his eyes never having opened on the inner kingdom of love, and he went down into the mud of life instead of rising towards the sunshine with a spirit of full and fuller wings. Though so admirable to common moods, Scott, like Pope, never knew the fullest depths of highest

life, let Ruskin preach them both as he may. It tells the limit of his own noble if hysteric and pre-Raphaelitic, that is, puritan, though all but seeing, character, that he admires so much both those men of ordinary good sense and charming talent but nothing further.

The question of quantity and quality is one about which there is no disunion with the artists, though it turns up in various forms daily, as debatable, among those who write before they are ready, or because they must, as they judge, or who have never had from nature the gift of clear eyes. Goethe was almost one of the Laocoons thus fated, occupied as he was, so much and so long, with dramatics; but the lyricism and the balance of epicism in his nature saved him. His later wisdom discovered that, for the kingliest minds, the gipsybred mountebank drama is only the seemingly gold and silver but really paper clad angel of the people's market place, a Fifine trying to dance upon the needle's point when attempting to usurp the place of distinction, not one of the aerial maidens of the highest poetry; and as human dancing on such a point of pain would be by no means the exercise to induce the calm of true womanhood or manhood, so imprisonment of a god of Olympus in the theatrical puppetbox is the great tragedy. His so-called play, *Faust*, was only a student and maiden idyl, almost village tale, for long; painfully it struggled through dramatic shapes; it gathered some epic universality at length about it: but it ever remains a torso unfinishable.

When the drama is at its limit, illustrating religion in temples, churches, or otherwise, where it takes the synonymous name of ritualism, and means external theatri-

calities, its special and indeed of necessity best ministers and artists are the narrower secondary natures. Should it be queried if among these must be placed Æschylus, and the elect spirits of the supposed Greek drama, the answer is that their times were, more than the Elizabethan, times of searching after the media and forms by which to teach wisdom in appropriate ways, and the narrowness of such means as printing is now, made them grasp what was nearest, so that some thought should be conveyed to a people eager for knowledge, and dying, most of them, in ignorance. That this search of theirs was only partially successful is shown by the fact that their attitudes are almost constantly epical when not lyric. The fullness and variety of drama, which is the expression of human passions in society, they had only the slightest idea of, and they are not dramatists at all in the scientific sense of the word. Menander's comedy was a far nearer approach to what moderns mean by the drama, and mean rightly. As Æschylus, next in position and genius to Homer, is almost wholly epical or mythoheroic, so Euripides is mainly lyrical or personal, and only in Sophocles is there a faint shadow of the human real society dramatic, his heights also being either in the epic ideal, the shaped gigantic masks alone showing that the gods and heroes not men were being shown, or in the sweet lyrical, both of these ideals of the less sociologic more ethereal refined type. It is amusing to hear of the decline of the Greek drama occurring in the hands of Euripides, the very one whose motives, though not his method, are most dramatic, no better test of this than the similarity, likely from imitation, of rightly named sensa-

tionalism in him and the Elizabethan. The latter knew well he was working this maudlin vein. The stories of the Syracusan common people doing anything to hear Euripides's realistic passionate unimaginative dramas should have told us what field this novel artist wrought in so successfully. He left epicism for human daily joys and sorrows, because his genius had no higher bent, but a born poet, he found a whole kingdom for himself, and became the first dramatist, lyrical though he was. The schoolboy appreciation of Euripides, as degrading the Greek drama after Æschylus and Sophocles, is very simple perception indeed. Arnold's just admiration of the attention of the two latter to form as against mere expression, is very clouded admiration, because he does not see that their work is almost purely epic, nor that as form is the first consideration in epic, so expression is the first in the drama. Modern sculpture has thus become expressional and realistic to its destruction. If anyone believes Shakespeare to be the highest poetic arrival by means of his dramas, then very certainly of the Greeks Euripides must stand next to him. First and second of the world's poets! But the secret of the misgiving poetic spirits have as to Euripides, is to be found in the fact that he wrought in a lower sphere, the dramatic, than did Æschylus and Sophocles, who were mainly epicists, non-expressionists, almost at intervals getting to Hindoo and Hebrew abstraction from form, the representation before popular audiences not being but accepting the only form of publication then most effective. Worshipping graven images is the same evil as realism in art. The whole subsequent change of showing real faces and un-

stilted ungigantic figures, and of introducing boys and women, as true elements of society, upon the stage, is the proof that the drama was only getting discovered in the time of Æschylus and Sophocles. With them it was still the mount Olympus of Homer, and the heroicism of men. Of women only queens and queens' daughters were admissible as heroic enough. The lyric ode continually kept transforming into the epic, the dramatic or society art overleaped. Were it not that there are no sharply defined lines between the epic, dramatic, and lyric, it might be said that Sophocles is the least of the four greatest Greek poets, because he stands most in a transition state. That he is the most admired follows from the fact that he is least defined to his sphere; he takes elements from epic, dramatic, and lyric regions with equal freedom. Whether he is not the tamest and least inspiring for this reason to the intense spirits of men of special genius, may be left to consideration. He is the eclectic of his period, with all the ease and power and calm, and thinness too, of that character. Certainly Euripides stands nearest true drama, as Æschylus does to true epic; but the whole three are more or less in transition states, therefore not at the highest points of effort.

Shakespeare, Milton, Browning, have professional poetic appreciation in their admiration of Euripides.

Taking much from Fleay's showing that the writer mourned in *The Sonnets* his forced leave to what he thought then the highest line of poetry by going to the drama, the poetry of his *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* his own legitimate realisation, still, there will remain sufficient to tell that he knew that the drama was not the

Himalaya of imaginative thought. Thought of the saving kind, of the kind that gives us possession of the full manhood or womanhood, needs another method than dramatic sight for its freest play, however necessary it may be that the infant minds have to begin with lyric song, which is but the drama of the ear, and continue next, for some time, if they are progressive, in the region of sights and shows. What Schiller says of the high purpose of the drama, as a possible instrument of vast national culture, is valuable and suggestive, but he did not accept things as they are, and therefore his words are not practical. He and Goethe had the dream of what they named the antique Greek spirit which might unite religious drama to profane, and this would dignify the sphere to the highest position; but their darkness was not to see that the spirit they thought Greek, was the universal spirit of the genius of humanity, which has no relation to times, places, or periods. When a deep enough soul comes he is always what they called Greek in those days of their gloomier searchings. Shelley once instinctively, not intellectually, answered this question. In reply to a friend's wonder that Keats should fully catch the spirit of Greek mythology though not knowing the language, he cried, 'He was a Greek.' The individual of sufficient inner force has always and everywhere an equally wide world of knowledge or science related to him for his experience and energy. In the creative political state of human best gift there are neither bond nor free, Jews nor barbarians, neither classicism nor romanticism nor realism. Was not Job, was not Shakespeare Greek in the deepest sense of that word? The drama, as being a required relaxation

of multitudinous modern cities for idle broken ignorant but also instinctive nature-seeking colour-loving desire, is of necessity a thing of secondary importance. Religious drama loses its power from the faculty of reading, and free opportunity for its exercise, allowing men and women to act their dramas or processional life-inspiring marches of forms alone, with their own soul as the stage, and all its memories and hopes actors and audience. Only some time after a revelation from the depths is secured by a poetic soul will the drama have its always bright brief periods. He gains new ground, and as the weaker faculties of darker men build on that, art gets farther and farther from epicism, which is the sacred light, through dramaticism, holy first, then profane, falling next to Drydenism, and finishing with the animalic lyre of innuendo. Fresh hope rises from the lyricism of sweetness and sorrow and innocence. The life of the divine race of man runs so to its good and evil climaxes.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRIFT OF GENIUS.

THE lovely bloom and genuine innocence, if studied deeply, of the two early acknowledged poems, have undoubted poetical beauty of the vital kind. Coleridge has well stated how the riches of the fancy, by variety, takes away the dangerous erotry such poems might have with crude unpoetic handling. The better explanation were that the innocent as opposed to the prurient and also to the rough acceptance of the facts of life by a modest sincere nature, is ever a healthy thing. Still, these 'fyttes' are only over the Jordan of fruition's achievements. It is in *The Sonnets*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest*, that the spheral harmonies of poetry can be fully recognised by hearts born for the better things. The popularity of some of the other pieces may be thought much greater, but, with that the fact, it is true to say that the most praised of them, *Hamlet* (wherein Shakespeare had found germs of vital poetry, and to which he, therefore, gave much of his spirit when he doubled the size of the earlier play), is inartistic, and owes its fame to causes similar to those which floated Byron's art to height for some time. The notoriety of such arises

from the exhibition of the struggle, and of the struggle not to victory, of young fermenting minds that have found no centre yet round which to revolve. It is always an awe-inspiring sight to see a huge wheel running crashingly out of its workings, though it is not the sight the genuine artist loves to meet with. Infinitely more joyful to him is it to watch, as Newton did the whole well balanced ellipsing solar system, the sweet powerful motion of a soul that has found its place, and goes round throwing, not fire flakes and broken deadly rough pieces about it, but gentle creative heat and light which give life in myriad forms to craving and delighted humanity. As a man's work is, to sufficiently penetrative imagination, himself, Hamlet is the Shakespeare of the period of wilderness culture, when he did not know what spirit he was of, the explanation of the mystery of the thousand and one criticisms of, to the weak busybodies, this insoluble problem; and some stern thinkers wish it had been permitted to him to have been silent till he had fully possessed himself, a wish which with them is one for the good of the universal race of men. We could spare, they think, the *Hamlet* as it now appears, maimed by personal darkness and forced to horror by savage popular requirements, and also as it is his and some minds beside, for a *Hamlet* by the fully seeing manumitted independent poet in his Prospero garment, the man poet or maker that is one with the god poet or maker; as we could spare the blind wild cries of an ill trained incontinent Byron for the work of a Byron of disciplined reach and beauty, the toiler in the divine element of eternal flowing art who might have been. That Hamlet is an intensely dramatic figure may be true,

but that such creation is of healthful tendency for humanity is another matter.

During the last hundred years there have been enough of incarnations of this ideal. Collars turned down very far can easily be followed by sleeves being rolled up quite as liberally. From the time Goethe 'sent girls to nunneries' against the best inspirations of his nature, acted the sham philosopher and real madcap in bombastic howling wine-cellars, tore the imaginary, but none the less poignant, wounds of his labouring breast open to public commiseration in the to be or not to be suicidal *Sorrows of Werter*, to the latest English pipings and mournings of half grown boys or feminine men in the market places, there has been a plentiful crop of crab fruit from this branch of the Shakespearean tree. The German, being a strong sincere soul, energised painfully enough out of so destructive a sphere; but, alas, the weaker ones have dwelt here as if it were the very heaven, and lower and lower the tune of their pathos becomes. The Hamletic lord had not a little health and strength side by side with this disease of selfishness; Tennyson like the 'child crying in the night' had beautiful, though weak, formless, if not morbid aspiration after better things; Lamartine and De Musset fluttered, flickered, and got burnt proudly and sadly at the same flaming torch: but the maunderings of Sterlings, Cloughs, and Arnolds ought to be positively the last avatar appearances of this dramatic character in the higher kingdom of thought. In prose spheres the influence has taken body in such detestable phrases as 'the spirit of the age,' 'the *Zeitgeist*,' and similar politics of imaginary cosmopolitan development. Who has not met with the posturing

high or low souled idiots of the grieved eyebrow and the promethean pain? If they are diminishing fast, society has some reason for thankfulness; it has suffered perhaps enough from this species of beggarlike display of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores. Few of us can say we are quite clear of the sinister fascinating influence of the student from Wittenberg, who was the gloomy youth of Stratford. It is often as true in artistic as in everyday spheres that the hobbledehoy should have his light kept under a bushel till his limbs or wings get disciplined. For the chronic dwellers in such a country of lamentation there is no hope.

> 'Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
> And in a little while our lips are dumb.'

This is their song, and it is not seldom a pity for mankind that the 'while' is so long as happens. At the same time, there is a period of life to which such literature of despair may have valuable appeal and high use. Sad, if we sit down and wallow in the mire that is intended to teach the brave ones that farther solid fruitful land ought to be the place of our dwelling and of our cultivation.

Enthusiasts for the best may see as much in the work of men before they gain their crown as more indiscriminate admirers; they may possibly recognise battles in cruder elements as the means of stripping off, to choice souls, the weakness of the early poetic life: but they would have self-restraint, and severe truthfulness to one's own genius, as the principles on which action must lean; so that the fulness of time and power may give the world its highest products of beauteous thought; the thought that is inclusive of the good and the true, of religion and

science. The best that could be said for *Hamlet* would be that its artist saw the dramatic force of a figure representing the rebellious period of culture and life, and embodied it with clear firm hand. As matter of fact, however, it would be very difficult indeed to show that the artist here does not lose himself altogether in the character, a modern Euripides with a modern Orestes; and therefore is, so far, inefficient, and of high art so much destructive. The young Dane is too evidently the young Englishman, without the artistic Sophoclean veil that glorifies the best making. As with dress, when there is little left for the imagination the person degrades to commonplace. Where feeling is seen bare, it becomes repulsive, if not horrible, as melodramaticism shows.

The spasmodic period that has an undoubted place in the history of every great soul can give no genuinely useful products; it should be a close time, if the fullest power in the future is to be the prize. In no case is it truer than in this, that he who bears wins. Of all the terror, horror, darkness, and general misery of such experience, not an atom that is useful for best making will be lost; and if *Hamlet* is a sufficiently artistic embodiment or not of a soul's experience in the gloom of youth, certain it is that such travelling through the woods could be made glory for the eyes and hearts of men. The one wise thing is that while in this *selva oscura* there be no shouting; for of that small good, whatever ill, can come. When ungainly cries arise thence, lucky if no worse misfortune happen than a shower of arrows from the free shooting Firmilians of the unpoetic land of mere but very useful wit. The strong brave heart listens to no premature

empty Pistols with their ragfair speeches, 'Bezonian, speak or die.' He goes on with shut lips till hé meets the healthful free light where he well knows he shall prove himself a man. The unfortunate of all unfortunates is a Dobell, a Smith, or a Browning, who, from over eagerness, has got up a tree, and, forgetting the way down, gets peppered cruelly enough while he screams loudly and, as it happens, bravely truly of the fair lands far far beyond the accursed forest of his entanglement.

All the masters have aimed towards the complete possession of their genius. That Homer cultivated the faculty in him truly was always generally held; though it is not settled whether he also is not one soul shaping the products of many minds. Virgil kept his *Æneid*, the best beloved work of the man, the very man, at his highest, which is alone the poetry of the poet, beside him till his death days; and, as all the world knows, wished it to be burned because an inadequate, as he thought, embodiment of his perfection. It had been many times as large as it is now, and yet so much reduction of size, and condensation and increase of thought and beauty, were not to his mind sufficient apology for its object of showing what he was in his connection with the Roman and far more the infinite world. In later periods, and especially now, it has been forgotten by all but similar artistic spirits that we are due humanity and ourselves, our best, our clarified products. What thought is not polarised, so to speak, is not saving and valuable to men. That such a poem as this should have been destroyed, because it did not satisfy its artist, his satisfaction being the sole *raison d'être* of the work, is a possible thesis admitting probably of proof, at

least to the minds of supreme artists. But men's lives and deeds are such uncertain things that the taught grasp perhaps too greedily after possession of whatever is higher than what they know. To say that the same artistic feeling about finish prevented most of these Elizabethan plays from being published, or named with their chief author's name, or even corrected and put into shape, when he had every means by position and wealth of giving them all the justice they could have, might not be completely or at all wide of the mark. Of those devoted to the perfect poetic work, Dante came nearest to the godlike, by the grand majesty of his self-confidence, through masterly construction and entire finish. Tasso, with inheritance of the old Roman determination, and with contemporary Italian vividity and completeness, has left the best reflection of his soul to us that he could make. After this best, the inherent gravity of souls, to put it paradoxically, his perhaps not of first calibre, as work before sight hints, becomes the test of comparison of men's effort; though, in a sense, all finished things stand equal. Like Virgil[1], Milton is incomplete, but in matter more than form. If his physical sight had remained with him, perhaps he had brought himself to unity, but his was a sadly unfortunate life for a poet, caught as he was in his best time on the points of the commonplace fanaticism of mean midd e merely phenomenal ranting devil-possessed fighting puritanical minds, and baited about till ever after he was only a maimed moaning giant, a sport to the philistine minds and a wonder and show to the weak babes and children of thought's kingdom, his *Paradises* being the final and far from successful grasps of despair after a missed

destiny, his second, the *Regained*, pale and all but dead though it is, being the nearest stretch of his powerful hand towards the golden thrones which await the greatest ones.

In the dramatic and in the politico-controversial prisons their grinding has sadly robbed our English two of the jewels of their rightful crowns. To those who love perfectly full and finished clearly mastered art, the saddest sounds are the loud trumpets blown about the later divine man. Why did he not withhold his shining vessel of honour from the flagons pouring sour wretched ribald fanatical dewborn low-sphered thought? His *Comus* in true poetic power, meaning, and finish, is as much above his *Paradises* as these are above most other English writing. When one thinks of it as from still Buckinghamshire, and as from his twenty-sixth year, having such wealth of reference, so fine sentiment for the highest architectural symbolism of poetry, such genuine search after form, though not without mistake caused by the dramatic demon that was still walking up and down this island, such balanced and unsensational but delicate and infinitely real feeling; and then of the long gap of many quarrelling years: cannot the loss, the spiritual death of it may be England's greatest son be only too well realised? *Comus* as a poetic work shows grander, certainly fewer fevered and morbid, possibilities than Shakespeare's first poems near thirty, though comparison is not useful nor necessary, their education being so different, each of them leading courses of comparative disaster, and neither arriving at his fullest perfection. Shakespeare's living keenness would put him, things at all favouring, quickly by the side, if not in front, of the

swiftest strongest grower; but Milton had such a magnificently calm spirit in his youth. In the light of that period, his later revival is but a ruin's rehabilitation, full for ever of the storming marks of savage times. The breadth of such a beginning promised an immense palace, whose living thought would king all men for their highest possibilities: what we have is a feudal castle above the rock-battling sea; a lonely terrible place where human interest is lost in the wild chaos of dead elements, moving without life's proper purpose. But despite strugglings through the, to him, thorny and almost pathless woods, Shakespeare had the better fortune to find sunny heights where his special and best faculties revived again, whence his eyes saw back beyond dread jungles of drama the fresh lights and colours of youthful joys and sorrows, where at calm moments the world of spirit displayed itself to his transfigured vision, where he had rest of body and mind by which to put his work into form. He was thus able to leave for man the lovely *Dream* and dreamt *Tempest*, as a court where there dwells a living queen, she who governs all that is by her love and by her beauty; and if reasons of birth and education as well as other stern ties of necessity have prevented the niches from being all filled, the walls from being lavishly carved and richly enough laden with time pictures, the spaces from being beautifully thronged with statuesque figures, let us at least know that the plan of the place of beauty is the clearest most beautiful the world has yet seen, that the epic of the fairest most lucid if hardly fullest truth yet built, has been the work of the sage of Stratford.

That there is a limit to advance in poetry, such as Macaulay in the famous essay of his youth tries to prove, is an opinion as absurd and spiritually as dangerous as Rousseau's which baptized France with its best blood, that the savage state of man is the noblest. If civilisation is a grander thing than barbarism, the highest expression of its sweetest strongest feeling and thought, through musical word, is, in like proportion, nobler than the instinctive barbaric savage rhapsodies of man in the animalic condition. No thinker would surely say that the whoop or war song of a red Indian is more poetic more heavenly, for the question ends thus, than the modern expression of the silent glow at heart of a people, or peoples, who are in the van of what is energetic, generous, and loving. The lying good old times theory is the cause of the delusion. The earth never knew such essentially good times as now. But the wiser years of the brilliant and often, though rather accidentally through his whole life, truth-striking youth, wrote *caveat* to such opinions. The very reverse of most of them according to his later preface were his more mature judgments. If Spenser has been great, if Milton has been, and if Shakespeare is first in the English Olympus now, the greater, for the socially fuller time, than these Solomons shall come, not the greater in quality, but in practical civil usefulness of application. Backward in the cycles, except for the equals themselves, who have the genius to know that humanity is one through all climes and periods, must dim to the peoples such souls, for elect ones of the nearer present to glow their periods. These in turn shall also withdraw from one kind of action for

another and higher. All making seers are equal, but each has his message suited to a time, and after the popular marriage of his thought, he takes his place higher and higher among the immortal stars, whose brightness to the poetic eyes and heart is unchangeable. There is no question of oblivion here, but of movement, procession, and rise from dignity to dignity. For the new universal divine poem there is constant need. Let him who toils at such work know, as indeed all who are worthy do, that his vision, if not seen now by his many loving but comparatively dark and progressing fellows, will inevitably have its future divine marriage to men's souls, for their best delight and life. That the work be from the inner recesses of a beautiful wholly loving productive soul, is the one condition of successful benefit to a more joyful humanity. If scientific civilisation grow a richer purer thing, so will the souls of men have ever their grander and grander palaces of delight, and they must have them elaborated with the new interests and actions of the time, as the poetic mind will know well how to do by its transforming gift. Not the less true is it that to the individual all times are equally poetic, the gift and culture sufficient for expression being the essentials. That fluent expression in the history of a language gets easier, is the sole superiority, and possibly there is as much lost for this in some other direction; but cunning artists at all periods write with living words, and these only; and life is in its essential relations of the same quality and meaning, the outer wrappings being, if of infinite use to all men, seen through habitually by the seers and makers.

That so clear an intellect as Shakespeare should have been thrown altogether out of the path by which the chosen men have held, for their best completion of work, was not a likely thing. Too many have accepted matters as if it were so. To shape for the benefit of his fellows what he had saved, for himself and them, out of his life of thought, is the last desire, and the noblest, of an exalted mind. When he has secured mastery, he has no peace of heart till he has fixed what is of such infinite importance to some section of his race, who would otherwise perish for lack of joy. No light burden but the heaviest it is that one can bear, and the duty will follow him with its never ceasing cry however he may try to escape from it. Through amusement and revelry, calm or noise, still the better genius drives the seeing man to be unselfish, and to tell others what he knows of the open mysteries. No one else of a time can do so much as he for his fellows, and there is no escape for him who is absolutely selected by his inmost actual knowledge that he has realised the one secret. When at this height of culture, he has further aims than mere sense pleasure, though this is never to be forgotten but only to be etherealised; wider views than society's ease, freedom, and beauty of procession and intermingling: he has to symbolise the whole rich drama of times past and present; showing the individual what his place is in it, that he may work worthily and in fine unison with universal movement of mysterious existence: he has to draw lines anew, for the changing race of men, of what time and eternity mean; that they may not be stocks and stones, or worshipping likeness of the bats and the moles, but living souls, with upward aspect, and with inquiring

acting joyous beauteous vigour. If the essentials of human nature are ever the same through eternity, the houses of speech, of civil order, of new invention, are ever changing, and weak eyes are apt never to see beyond and within the flow of outer changeable things to the living reality on which all such exhalations stand. Dead mythologies that once were prospect glasses through which the better to see the divine mystery of substance get dim, and at last untruthful, shutting the light of life wholly from the sons of men. It is then that genius is welcomed, and often with too much enthusiasm. The blind eyes in love with their dark telescopes are hard to be benefited, but at least the young rising peoples, who have no old, only the new, hope, must be trained to see in within the promised land, which really does flow with milk and honey. Sometimes it is not much the worse that the Joshua leaders are not quite enlightened as to what they are about themselves. The fewest of the old race escape, and Raphaels can well allow the devil and the archangel Michael to fight about the body of a Moses. The eyes of all the rest are too dim to see from Nebo; even this they cannot have. There is ultimately the conquest of a holy land for only one or two of the old generations, but with their guidance all the young may have beautiful paradisaic possessions.

CHAPTER IX.

PLAYWRIGHT WORK.

It may be said that not perhaps one fifth, if so much, of the plays was actually invented by him who has shaped them. For his own theatre, and also for the theatres of others, he used to dress up, or 'conceit' as it then was with truth called, pieces to requirement, written in previous drafts by other men as tales, novels, or plays. At that time theatric writing of the purely secular kind was new. The real drama was in its infancy, or perhaps better, in the flush of its early enthusiastic youth, mummings of all kind being long the popular rage; and bands of young adventurers, nearly all university men, had flooded the opening for talent with crude but energetic dramatic products. His regular duty was to judge these for selection and improvement. He would have quite as much work in the way of cutting out overgrowths and bombastic passages as in introducing new matter, though he did the latter very freely, laying under contribution ancient and modern select passages. From Ovid, Warburton showed he, or more likely some of the university men, took several of the most famous popular speeches. Titania's curtain lecture to her Oberon, the gem poetic harangue perhaps of all English, being a close paraphrase of this, in real accordance with our higher preva-

lent ideas of poetry, the best of Roman poets. Indeed, as an original maker and lyrist he is undoubtedly above Virgil; but only as Euripides is nearer the real secular oratorical drama than his predecessors, and is above them. The word Titania is from Ovid's naming of Pyrrha, the wife of Deucalion, she who, as life, flowers, fruit, was the child of the great Titan of heat and light. The famed 'seven ages of man' is almost exact with Solon's verses which Philo Judæus quotes. And so on. What Pisistratus was, or has been supposed to be, to the Homeric epic, Shakespeare without doubt has been to the literary wealth of his own time; that of other times, if suitable, being equally eligible to his notice. The more the dramatic history and literature previous to and contemporary with him is studied, the less claim he has to the authorship of these pieces. As Reade, in his own defence, put it, he was emphatically a 'setter of diamonds.' In those days of difficult publication of thought, the favour would have been to introduce the whole or part of the compositions of authors before the public; and his generous way of putting them thus under contribution got him the ill-will of at least one unsuccessful man, Greene, who, dying in the grief and poverty that a dramatic course oftenest leads to, spoke of him, though Chettle has glossed it, as a fine bird made by the feathers taken from others, as one hiding a tiger's heart within a player's hide. The modern individualising passion for originality is apt to keep this give and take system out of sight. Men then did not preserve copyrights as now they do tenaciously, with little of the self-sacrifice which is the poet's joy.

To what are called Shakespearean scholars all this

is quite elementary erudition, but unfortunately what smaller things they find further are not so valuable. The shrewder people put them among the antiquarians as lost souls not unwisely perhaps. It may not be without general use for active spirits, to say that out of this collected magazine of Elizabethan and pre-Elizabethan literature many passages can be yet taken and recognised as the work of others. Mercutio's speech of Queen Mab is likely the paraphrase of a lyric of Drayton's, the contemporary poet of the hills, valleys, streams, and woods, with their fairy inhabitants. Lord Stirling, an Alexander, *né* Macdonald, the shrewd first Earl of Stirling, the tutor of prince Henry son of James I., and a poet yet to get the fullness of his well deserved but hitherto very limited fame, was the author of the grand 'gorgeous palaces' abstraction. It is known that Shakespeare and James I.'s 'own philosophical poet' were friends, and no more equal company could he get in his time. From Plutarch and Montaigne, of foreign writers, there is perhaps most. Indeed he was the pupil of Montaigne, in the literary sense, as Montaigne was the real pupil of Buchanan, a greatest of Scots, if Johnson's word should go. At all events, his skill in the pedagogue's weapon had often made a king tremble in his little shoes, and, O the 'wisest fool,' by memory in his big ones. To limit what was appropriated from the numerous and excellent poets of the time, is impossible; and it is no exaggeration to believe, further than the Edinburgh critic of 1852, that Shakespeare kept *poets*. Were it not that we have entirely other ground than the dramatic on which the monument of his fame can stand for ever, criticism having sufficient curiosity

and acumen would find him but the greatest appropriator and paraphrast, whose chief honour were the skill of making *le tout ensemble* for popular revels, a great master of the arrangement of others' work, or, as Schlegel says, though hardly in this relation, 'a profound artist, not a blind and wildly luxuriant genius.' The luxuriance and wildness, what Milton in his boyhood describes as the 'native wood-notes wild,' were there because those of other spirits thick as leaves in Vallambrosa.

Cautious selfish money making spheres and periods know little of the immense literary fruitfulness of merry companionships in the dramatic fields. Drama is not solitary poetry by reason of its existence on amusement as foundation. Rather would the flush of speech and wine be the sunshine in which it would best grow. Elizabethan drama, unlike the Greek, which is really epic display for soul and not for sense, shows full proofs of this its process of manufacture. The lower wit and humour are the direct results of fellowship of not the most refined kind; and perhaps all the better they were for the freedom towards the embodying in words of real humanity, towards opening the common widths and depths, good, bad, and indifferent, of men. Peele, Greene, Ford, Lodge, Nashe, and Ben Jonson, were some of the wits against which Shakespeare had to rub his wit; and it is not difficult to see how the genesis of much of what is excellent, quaint, and odd, was.

If Ben Jonson had been a manager of a theatre instead of simply being a single writer, and the laureate, there is little doubt but that what plays might have been collected under his name after death, similarly to the

Heminge and Condell undertaking, would have had the same kind of vitality and universality in them as those under Shakespeare's name have. There is this to be said, however, that Jonson, or any other, may not have had so catholic managerial sympathetic skill as he of Stratford. That Ben Jonson was more self-sufficient in composition may tell two ways, either that he was the greater master of the two, or the pedant. But to few Elizabethans indeed can the latter term be applied, freedom being in the air then in such sense that the worlds of literature, of commerce, of religion, and all others, seemed opening their gates wide to the walls.

The most rabidly dangerous of his admirers as being dramatist, cannot but acknowledge, if they know anything of what has been done by the better critics, that all the plays with perhaps one or two exceptions are founded on novels, stories, and pieces, that were well known to the theatrical workshops before he took them up. It is also agreed that he generally followed their plot and incidents with little change. Numerous discussions for and against his dull or divine art that hangs the tragedy of *Othello* on a handkerchief are worthless; he simply followed his copy. Some may argue that only the skeleton tales of such plays as *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, were used, and that he fleshed them to whatever beauty and purpose they have. This is not so apparent as it may look, for the original stories are cunning and pathetic. It has also to be taken into account that the same tale passed through the hands of more than one of those eager young writers of a heroic time, and not unlikely only the latest touches of 'agony' belonged

to the great master of the revels. The Globe theatre must have had a plethora of such incubating riches. Those young men sold their writings often for not much more than a tavern's reckoning, caring, like Shakespeare himself, nothing further for them than that they supplied the passing hour. There are some of these orphan plays still in existence, and parallel passages are to be pointed out in them to passages in the βίβλος of the mythic poet, that are recognised, by wonderful ears, as being of the right Shakespearean ring. A play called *The Witch* in its first draft, becomes in its last *Macbeth*; and the name Middleton is one of the earliest, though there may have been a dozen between the first and the last of its makers.

In the dramatic region it has been very general with the highest artists to use freely the suitable matter let it come from whatever direction. What is a greater characteristic than just this of Calderon, the fluent Spanish dramatist, and more than dramatist, working at a similarly allegorical but opposite religious period in his nation's history to that of ours for our poet? Did not Goethe take almost all the metaphysical parts, especially the fine gentleman devil, of *Faust*, from ideal Calderon's spiritual play, *El Mágico Prodigioso*, as both of them took their satans from the drama of *Job*? Valentine of *Faust* came from Laertes as Faust himself from Marlowe's Faustus, mad Ophelia's song being well assimilated in more places than one. The Germanic student and gretchen portion of the play, which grew after the same manner of addition through many years, though by one hand only, as the Elizabethan masterpieces, is the most essential production of the personal and really lyric

genius of him who has his characteristic fame in being called the author of the poetical yet unmusical and therefore shapeless *Leiden des jungen Werthers.*

One would almost agree with Ulrici, who makes Shakespeare not only the direct master of Goethe, but the father of all the higher German literature, beginning with Lessing. He goes too far, however, especially when he holds *Sorrows of Werter* to be but a paraphrasing of *Hamlet*, and more especially of the suicidal speeches. No doubt, the influence is there of the English play, but there is far more of the prevailing sentiment of the eighteenth century, sometimes mock heroic, but often intensely true, so true as to reach the most violent action, the sentiment of which Rousseau was the author. It is also to be noticed that our own idyllic essayists, like Goldsmith and Sterne, had some effect on the German's young spirit. Carlyle possessed but elementary notions of the highest European literature when he wrote his *Sartor Resartus.* In his instinctively true and good revolt against the Rousseau and Byron rage of the intellectual world of his youth, he clung with fanatical devotion to Richter, and especially to Goethe, because he found with them some healthy shelter of reality as against false ideality from the demonic bravado poetry and thought of the time: but as it is apt always to do, this very devotion, induced as much by terror as love, blinded him long, if not always, to the further stars of which these Germans were but the attendants. He fell in love with Goethe's garment theory of nature, a theory like the Irishman's blanket that did not improve by too much cutting and handling; and he thought him the intolerable immensity

of human achievement. 'Shut thy Byron, open thy Goethe,' was the noblest English advice of this century; but there is a higher direction still, Shut thy Goethe and open thy Shakespeare. Goethe knew well where he himself got the truest metal that made him usefully famous. Earnest manly spirits like to drink at the furthest fountains, if possible, and Shakespeare is a clearer further one than the great German.

There is fatherhood and sonship with all the higher spirits. To take an easy example, *Lycidas* could be almost made up from Virgil, Theocritus, and Spenser, passage after passage. Catullus is Sappho, Tennyson is Theocritus, Horace is often some old Greek like Alcæus or Roman like Ennius, and on the wrong side of the line, despite one note of charming though monotonous music, Swinburne is everybody, and therefore not himself at all hardly. The chief honour is to carry forward the torch of poetic glory through generation after generation in as high brilliancy as possible, all the better perhaps, though we do love pure originality could we only get it, if it has the force of many past collectors of heat and light in it. Shakespeare was a generous borrower, and the freer giver and lender for that. His helpers were legion. In epic work also he did not energise with absolute independence throughout. 'Thinking is the hardest task.' When the door opens to full freedom it is the easiest. Like Burns he stole his nation's thought.

What is thus said of Goethe and others is certainly not in the spirit of De Quincey, the friend and depreciator of, alas for the wind-driven crowd, as His Littleness said, 'plagiarising Coleridge,' though there may be granted

some pot and kettle reasons for ill will between them. His efforts to measure the genius of Goethe, of whom Madame de Staël said to know him was to know all, with perhaps more meaning in her phrase than merely generous woman's heart prompted, are as unspeakably ridiculous as his pedantic taking of Shakespeare under his critical wing of middle class Manchester feather to make him a 'perfect gentleman,' the alias of which is too plainly 'genteel snob.' Such a soul cannot know why the deep heart of things, in love for all his children, draws the bar sinister over the shields, not only of Solomons, but of greater than Solomons. Here Emerson also has made mistake of maudlin patronage. The opium eater does better in hugging himself as to his tricky style, and in making ingenious flatulent morbid degrading dreams, than in dealing with souls who have reached the happy land, and who have stripped for new construction in the original depths of thought and emotion.

Because they were not his own, explains sufficiently the mystery of Shakespeare's carelessness about these plays for after times. It is not a little suggestive that of his poems, *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, and *The Sonnets*, he was careful, trusting to them for his fame, as he never did to the plays. Fleay thinks that the burden of *The Sonnets* is just his sorrow that, for mere living, he had to leave what he knew was best poetry for that which, do what genius may, will be only wooden imitation of the Toledo steel that such spirits as Spenser and the Italians were then wielding. Hallam has ventured only on the edge of the question, but he refers to Greene's *Groat's Worth of Wit*, as supporting him in his remark that 'it

remains to inquire who are to claim the credit of those other plays, so great a portion of which has passed with the world as the genuine work of Shakespeare.'

The extraordinary discussions founded on supposed, and very likely, real, internal evidence, from precision of special knowledge, indulged in by such men as Payne Collier, Lord Campbell, Bucknill, Rushton, Kellogg, as to whether he might not have been a lawyer or sailor or soldier or doctor, or all of them and many besides, a kind of mankind's epitome, ought by their absurdity to hint the rational explanation.

There is one tradition as to his antecedents that might go far to explain the quality of the heart of the man, and some other strange circumstances; but it cannot be authenticated, and it is not of primary consideration that we get into such details, if we could. The son of parents who could not read or write, though he did attend the grammar school at Stratford, schools at that time going over more Latin and Greek than they get credit generally now for, and though it had a Cambridge M.A. for master, still it has to be guessed how, with his known entanglements previously, early in his twenties, he could have been busy in London with the highest literary work of his time, the equal at least of university and learned men, and how such a poem as *Venus and Adonis* could have been written by him at the period it was, a poem that has marks of wide and good culture. If, as is said, he was the usher of a rural school for some time, it might explain this; a position that has done good help to several literary 'wonders of the world.' The inspiring country in the strongest educating years is not the worst

of universities to the enthusiastic soul of genius. The universities and the academies of the talents are often but the mephistophelic apollyons, the destroyers of enthusiastic spirit, by their courtesies, their conventionalities, their abashing etiquettes, ay, to the book or books to which you must get introduced, and, above all, by their well meaning but sterile pedantries. He would not jump with common spirits, no, though they had excess of seeming knowledge, wealth, and honour, is the explanation of many a strong thinker's quarrels with his actual *alma mater*. The invisible one is the true nourishing mother. At all events, our constituted ones are ever apt to become cruel 'nameless' stepmothers to the higher souls. Spenser, Milton, Wordsworth, Southey, Shelley, and, if hardly an originator, a *facile princeps* appreciator of art, Carlyle, could never write enthusiastically of the visible cheerful ladies that claimed their sonship. The more pity it was. Perhaps the alienation is explained by the extreme cases of spirits who become so solitary that wife and children, father and mother, brother and sister, their very nation, forget them, as they toil on in their love for general man. It may be that 'disputing with the doctors' is the best part of the course. But here is digression of the nodding type.

When one reads any of these dramas, he undoubtedly feels that there is a unity in them, but if not prejudiced he will detect that it is, in the division of labour sense, a manufactured unity, and therefore of the same nature and effect as is the whole which an orchestra is, or that a manufactory, commercial house, committee, or assemblies for speech or other purpose, are. No single intellect could

deal in exactly similar ways with so many different accidents and persons. Very sharp minds may protest that the man was a giant, that he is not calculable, which is a kind of gesturing that may be called eblouissantism. The same imperfections are in these plays considered as poetry, one or two excepted, as are in the junction of many instruments for music. There is strength to catch the general ear of the many, but there is coarseness; there is grandeur, but the pure strings of simple sincere feeling are lost. Compare a line or two of *Comus*, of Dante's *Paradiso*, or of *Maud*, with the tenderest parts of these company plays, and it will be discerned in what direction the liking of the poetic sense will follow. But such comparison does not make conflict between these classes of poetry; it only gives them their rank. The culminations of comedies and tragedies are the grand final heights or depths of the bandmaster; the tendernesses of poetry are the young fresh maiden's tearful song to the golden summer evening's harp, and the breathless sweetness of thought's highest ravishing vision.

As a dramatist, Shakespeare is in the same position exactly with Rubens as a painter, and with the elder Dumas as a novelist, using up by his own clear judgment the best intellect he could collect or secure for his purpose, that purpose like theirs being, in its main if not first intention, to make money. Alleyn and he were no rodomontade attitudinising smiling weeping creatures, like too many of the companionhood. Strong simple grasp of facts is ever the peculiarity of men of brains, and they draw everything towards themselves, with effort certainly, but with less than is generally thought.

The white of the fish, nevertheless, turns up, with fatal suggestiveness, in the famous sonnet where there is the mourning at 'fortune's evil provision,' by which his 'name was branded :'

> 'And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in like the dyer's hand.'

He knew that he was toiling in the cruder spheres of poetic work, and also the narrower, man's interest forgotten for a theatre's contemporary handful of cruder souls, where only small part of the glow within him could take immortal body. If it had been possible for him, he would have gone to peaceful Stratford, to think, long before he did; for his heart was that of a poet of spiritual silent immortal effort, rather than that of the vigorous coarser dramatist whose everyday worldlike action seems to the many his special glory. Too long for the purity of his truer higher notes did he work among the dramatic wild crop of his energetic blood and fire bravado adventurous time, but we should not forget to appreciate the effect of the touch of his master hand, though there can be no doubt we lost better goods by his care of these. He was conscious of the lower, and very soon narrower, sphere of this labour. His singular silence, and that of his fellows, considering he was a monarch over representation, or, as Heminge and Condell, his first editors, wrote, 'a magistrate of wit arraigning plays daily,' can be explained by this personal feeling, as well as by any other consideration. Campbell has theories of burnings which blotted out very likely his published claims over these writings, and does not forget the London fire of 1666 as a possible instrument; but he might as well spe-

culate as to whether many of Shakespeare's private explanatory writings had not been burnt in the library at Alexandria.

Wordsworth says, 'Grand thoughts (and Shakespeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits without some violation of sanctity.' The poet of the lakes, however, is apt to forget the great popular necessities of cities. They require exposition of poetry to keep life in them notwithstanding bloom and perfection cannot be given. To the individual poet alone, if higher than such work, is there suffering; and the truer his nature, the more he will feel the painful gulf between his ideal and what real must be embodied. It is curious to find that, while connected with theatrical toil, his *Troilus and Cressida* got printed having as recommendatory editorial note that it had never been 'staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed by the palms of the vulgar;' and let it be noticed that it is not the simple but the half cultivated who are thus named. Rather uncommercial undramatic words, one would think, to have the approval, or even to pass the notice, of him whose fortune depended on the many. Yet here, as elsewhere, criticism knows not whether his name attached to a play meant that he wrote it wholly, or only partially, or merely finished it. But Wordsworth is not at all alone in knowing what a bed of Procrustes the theatre, with the popular demands for blood and savagery of a time that was close to the most brutal period of English history, must have been, to a nature so civilised, so intellectually strong, so sweet, melancholy,

deep, and loving, as his was. Friederich Schlegel notices the broken pieced dismembered character of all that is truly of the poet's inner heart, as it had to appear in the dramas; and his judgment also laments that the field of epicism did not open fully, as he thinks it was almost about to do, for this universal soul and first of Teutons. Augustus thought the historical plays to be epic; but, to take *King John* for fair example, they were not his at all in such epic aspect, his work on them being but didacticising or conceiting and fitting them for theatric effect. Perhaps the most characteristic feature in his work was for long an indefinite philosophising of these dramatic tales. The Schlegels felt rather than saw that it was impossible for such a spirit to live intellectually and not have its partial or complete epic written. In the present case, there is at least one finished work of the kind; whether it is sufficient or not is a weighty question.

Though shrouded under the letter 'X,' Lamb risked his popularity in England, and especially in London, for faithfulness to his feeling that Shakespeare's best genius was not of the stage. 'It is common for people to talk of Shakespeare's plays as being *so natural*, that everybody can understand him. They are natural indeed, they are grounded deep in nature, so deep that the depth of them lies out of the reach of most of us.' . . . 'The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading.' . . . 'But is *The Tempest* of Shakespeare at all a subject for stage representation?' . . . 'It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of opinion that the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of almost any other

dramatist whatever. Their distinguished excellence is a reason that they should be so. There is so much in them, which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye, and tone, and gesture, have nothing to do.' These are some of his thoughts. He could not endure the impertinence which degrades Westminster Abbey,

'Shakespeare and Garrick like twin stars shall shine,'

because he knew what a world of distance, in artistic dignity, there is between the monkey tricks of the stage, and the sublime poetic energy; and he, therefore, would have taken not only *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Lear*, away from the 'pawing' of recitation to the sanctity of the study, but in his indignation the comedies also he would take out of the raucous sphere, Kean and Mrs. Siddons seeming to him but puppets. The 'hateful incredible' which makes men and children laugh at Macbeth witches and Ariel spirits, is another of the strong reasons why he extols the 'quiet delight of reading.' But Lamb did not see that neither for children nor men is dramatic representation required; it is for the crude undisciplined young imaginative idle class, who can swallow wonders with voracious enough appetite. What he felt with his fine critical sense was that the artist here was working beneath himself. In every one of these wild or merry tales he heard some snatches of the song and tune of the higher epic land, where the full men, who become in their greatness as little children, dwell, and to which land the study is the strait gate. Therefore we get large help, incidentally, from the almost violent vindication of the gentle essayist against the assumptions of actors that

for them, and them alone, indeed for their glorification as *equal* artists with any poet, the subtle energy of this one was exerted. In short space there is much wisdom to be discovered from this discussion; but it needs sharp eyes, because there is a good deal of intellectual cloud, if delicate precision of heart, in the enthusiast.

A few words might have explained the difference between such men as Garrick and Shakespeare, but Lamb's indignation was too strong for his head. A true histrionic artist like Garrick is as surely a member of the kingdom of art as the other. The difference is in their domain. For inspired moments there is the highest quality of art in histrionic impersonation by a poetic soul, yet they are limited by so many things that they have little and narrow use to humanity. The ignorant peasant in a rapture of devotion has the passive and active quality of art as a poet has, but he is only limitedly useful to others. An actor, like all artists, does gloriously only a few times of his life, and the impression of being in the presence of the unspeakable, which is the recognition of the one vital element, genius, is given only to a comparative few, and for moments, during a short few years. Less permanent and widely reaching in time and place is his truest skill than that of the composer of music, the painter, the sculptor, the poet, for humanity; so much so that he is barely within the kingdom of permanent art. He is less of an artist, in the sense of influence, than even the orator, whose efforts for man's benefit are fixable by symbols and history in greater degree. His place is nearest that of the noble artisan who is content to work beautifully as one of many instead of being original, the life

which Goethe envied. It is cruel to grudge the applause an earnest man or woman worthily wins in so transient a field. Verily it is the next thing to writing their names in water, and they do great and humane service to many souls teachable only by the garish senses. It is not just to depreciate the mimickings as 'Elia' does, for when in their flower and fruit they are a genuine and often more easily intelligible form of spiritual expression than by sound, colour, stone, or pen itself. Still, they are so limited by time and place, so fickle and so passing, that his indignation at any attempt to make Garricks and Shakespeares twin stars is more than justified. As well say that Napoleon and Shaw the lifeguardsman, both true soldiers, were twin stars. There is need for each class of men: let us value them; and, above all, let us, for our own spiritual good, not *mix* them.

Lamb knows that it was better that King Lear and Cordelia should die against all the poetic justices of which Dennis was the master; yet it may well be doubted whether, with reference to the drama of actual oppidan life, the Queen Anne critic has been wrong. Such endings as that of *King Lear* are more epical than dramatic; that is, they are above popular conceptions: and if we look practically on the stage as a teaching of the less disciplined spirits of the people, as it always has been when not the religious stage, the common poetical justices are both more useful and effective; a fact which has much to say to the want of appreciation that Shakespeare ever suffers from in a worldly place or epoch. The French are easily first in everyday drama because of their historical period.

The theological spirit of the present time has shown a tendency to revive his work of dramatic representation through the country; but unless the spirit of theology should come over altogether out of the churches, and strangely enough even bishops and professors have been blindly leading thus lately, there will be no permanent appreciation of Shakespeare. If religion should come to this temple, there would have to be fuller purer work than the middle trying position the poet had to occupy allowed him to make. It is safer for the churches to keep away from the drama of ordinary life, unless they mean to make it that of epic or heroic and divine life, such as the Greek drama was; and it is true that they would miss the people, the mass, in getting to such heights; while the higher souls would go still higher for satisfaction. What we wait is a new idea, that is, a fresh vision of the eternal same, and then we shall have the epic, dramatic, and lyric worlds arraying themselves to flower of beauty. The renovation in spiritual matters comes not from below, but from above.

The blood and thunder, the vulgar intellectual scream, the blast, the bathos, the bombast, which are in the plays, are borrowed feathers; rather are the original feathers of the common bird which he dressed up beyond its nature with the golden plumage of his epic imagination. It is only in *The Tempest* that the unity of nature and dress comes to some perfection. The poetic that is in the book which is absurdly grotesquely accepted as his by so many belongs chiefly to him, and it can always be recognised by its quiet close characteristics, close by his artistic nature, and also close, sometimes to a kind of pedantry,

as if those scholastic comrades about him might be very glad to act tutor to him in finding him tripping, and not from love but emulation or worse. The unfettered poet is largely after the manner of Spenser, at whose well he drank deeply in his most appreciative and impressionable years, just as this master had for Arethuses, Greece and still more Italy. Many names and methods, nearly all his early work, much substance throughout his life, were directly imitative of the author of *The Fairy Queen*.

The impulse given to the best English poetry by the 'poet of poets,' as he is called, both through Shakespeare, as shall be seen, and through Milton, whose weakness was that while intensely allegoric in feeling he was so blindly, his intellect not mastering his dreams, is not yet at all understood as it will be. Sydney also is one of the side strong tributaries to the main stream. What Masson has said of Milton's filial relation to Spenser is of the right temper, but it is only entering the field.

The true spirit of the whole wave of poetic intellect from the miracle and morality plays, and through Elizabeth's time, was, as is the case with all the highest effort of poetry, deeply distinctly symbolical and allegoric; witness, among many examples, Sackville's share of *Mirror for Magistrates*, Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*, Drayton's fairy pieces: and if this be not easily seen by all eyes in the workmanship of the strongest minds of this and other flood times of thought, it is more intensely there a thousandfold than, for example, in the Zimris and Achitophels of Dryden, which were a last effort, and the prosiest, because nearest to crude fact and sense realism, with little enough of the never dying charms of reserve

and mystery, before ground ebb of poetic ingenuity and original delight in new making. Were we to take professors of science as showing how the wind blows in our own century, there is reason enough to mourn another flat time now. One of the most distinguished risks this: 'Objects of sense are more worthy of your attention than your inferences and imaginations. You can't see the battle of Thermopylæ take place. What you can see is more worth your attention.' All honour to the Carlylians who have battled so fervently against such deadly doctrine to men; and the more do they deserve sympathy that this very spirit of sense is so strong in themselves that they sometimes curse friends as well as foes, the musical idealists as well as the gross men of the senses. There is great searching over the earth after some strong sweet help from a head and heart commanding and using these schools of thought for mankind's higher life. The full tide shall then be. Of all the knowledge and reality the musical soul of clear gift will lose nothing essential, but he will raise to the higher kingdom the thoughts and the things of the time, as of all time. Allegory will turn infinity to him, every work of his being alive, and personal to its smallest parts. Which is the honoured artist, he who, by the measure of his cunning, can weave the more, or he who sits at the less complex manufacture? Whatever the lazy charlatans may say, poetry is like lace or ivory or gold work, the more valuable the more it costs of human skill and life. Why will people be willingly blind in such matters?

Isaac Disraeli doubts Spenser's allegoric work and references to living persons and passing events after the

poet, like Tasso, who perhaps was too late in discovering himself and what he was at, has been kind enough, and it may be said perhaps mistaken enough, to help dull understandings as to one, and, even with philosophic Pope judge, possibly the greatest secret of his trade. While abusing a critic who had keen poetic perception of the pearls of *The Fairy Queen*, Disraeli forgets how Spenser, besides getting immediate unusual contemporary fame by, nearly suffered for, his skill in tapestry of this kind. King James I. who knew what literature was thoroughly, wished to cast accounts with him about the relations between his mother, the beautiful Mary Queen of Scots, and Duessa of the poem. If Elizabeth had been very civil to her king cousin, Spenser might have had a turretted bushel put over his candle, if it were not perhaps altogether extinguished, for his skill in symbolical work. Ben Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden that Raleigh had a written account of the poem from Spenser, in which Duessa stood for Mary, and the blatant beast for the puritans, Jonson with his *Callipolis*, or beautiful city, etc., being himself a coarser kind of allegoriser, though 'Spenser's stanzas pleased him not nor his matter,' or so he said, who said many rough things. The silly heroics to be heard about poets never stooping to personalities are in the main nonsensical; for there is to them no charm greater than the clothed personal, except the result of all personal communion, the divine love. It is in this element all the artists work. Phidias, Praxiteles, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Vinci, Correggio, Dürer, Beethoven, are of the same temper as indeed all poets with Spenser, his weakness being that he could not contain himself from

the cruder single cold allegories and from interpreting them to vulgar apprehension.

In the light of all which thoughts what is more instructive and pregnant with hope than the falling of the wave of Spenserian poetry, the flood tide of English thought till then, down to the wordmongers of the clear rational disenchanted prosaic, enthusiasm hating, mere man of the world understanding, for the fresh vital healthy child-like rise again from lyrical naturalism of Burns, though somewhat more than inspired by Scotch song, and James I. of Scotland's lyre; from single sincerity of Cowper, prosaic almost, but so refreshing after the futilities and verse philosophies of the Pope era; from Scott's love of ballad and savage literature; through the dimly seeing attempts of Coleridge, and with all his essaying in metre of at intervals the listening passive non-constructive yet divine Wordsworth; through the uncertain Werterian romanticism of too indolent or rather busy idle brilliant schoolboy Byron, who is such a mixture of genuine inspiration and as genuine quackery, not knowing himself at all, and rather inclined, for ease to the sole of his foot mainly, to admire the dead but finished letter of Pope's mechanical wisdom and penny wit jingle regular as continual droppings, the constructive allegory in *The Rape of the Lock* the only glimpse he had of poetry as distinguished from rhetoric, though undoubtedly the Hamletic lord was of the advancing tide, moving powerfully, but as it were against his will, with his back first, his feeling or instinct truer than his head; through far riper work than the Childe's, the calm inspired authoritative Olympian, in *Hyperion* supremely epic, shapings of

Keats, the conscious and it might have been double spirited Elisha to Milton's prophetic Tishbitic youthful days, the Raphael, as it is, of English poetry, as his chief master is in his later darker developments the Michael Angelo; through the true but materialistic violent, and therefore unsteady or steady as by paroxysm, thin glimpsings, absence of calm which he told Godwin he had not and greatest spirits had, wreaked expression, thunder, nothing but phosphoric thunder, of intense desirous feminine beauty-convulsed negative Shelley; up to Tennyson, who, by part conscious perception and faithfulness to form in *Idylls of the King*, is holding the helm straightest yet, but alas weakly enough, afraid to trust his own genius a yard from narrative just made by the vigorous faith of past spirits, towards the fully crowded ports of the richest most cunning poetry! It is a highly promising time in the history of a new, and it is to be hoped the greatest yet known wave poetic for the race speaking English. Will the man arise who can grapple with the problem and overcome? Tennyson in the slang word of a recent satirical entirely unpoetical dry hearted clear headed critic has 'funked' it. This is not wonderful, for it will be the hardest earthly work for him who is worthy. Will he be disowned when he does come? and consequently produce a crippled thing of beauty when there might be an Apollo, a *Tempest* when there might be a *Calm*? Whether received or rejected, he will certainly be no monster of the gushing schools of *Sturm und Drang* romanticism, which are likely to be lost in the democratic erotry of Whitman, never to rise to the epic heights of what is

most truly human because ever approaching nearer and nearer to the divine.

If we study *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Lucrece*, *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Sonnets*, we have Shakespeare in his own character. Going through the plays, after this preparation, it might be possible to pick out his additions and interspersions with good success, and sure enough the quietest most didactic most meditative parts would fall to him, and the sometimes intolerable blazonry and hysterics of which, as might be expected, superficial displaying actors and actresses are fondest, to the young taverners of infinite heroicism, green men, true men, but wild. He would no more invent wholly and write, if he could, such 'mouldy tales' as *Titus Andronicus* and *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, than he could have waded out and drowned the Spanish Armada. *As You Like It*, though known to be an adaptation to the stage of Lodge's novel *Rosalynde: Euphue's Legacie*, has, with the exception of *Cymbeline* perhaps, most of the poet in it. Jacques, which was entirely of his own formation, is not a dramatic character; he is a shadow, clearly, of the Stratford country youth looking back to early days, with a longing for the forests of the Avon, where Washington Irving rather sentimentally pictures him as in his true delight. It is a more poetic creation than Hamlet by a great deal. The nature of the cases may make it so, but, further, the flushed youths of infinite heroicism can be credited for some of the main features of the Danish prince, either objectively or subjectively. To put Hamlet in the shape he is now, was the work of the master dramatist, but like the famous

apprentice's pillar of Roslin Chapel some of the matter, such as it is, perhaps exceeded the power of the architect himself to come at. The classical pieces are very evidently the work of the academic spirits, in the main; and that they are not immaculately accurate is hardly contradiction, since the scholarship of mad Marlowes and similar geniuses of loud unripe type is never amazing for its absolute faithfulness.

It may be thought there is no useful purpose in making these plays a still greater sea of conjecture than they are, but there is great good to be gained by limiting to small degree what is to be considered the poet's work. Some things we know are his, and let these be the trust. Those who may can amuse themselves in anonymous Elizabethan literature, which is what the bulk of the plays is; the artists and students of thought must not go vaguely through finest art after such manner, unless they wish to get destroyed for all valuable toil on their own account. The book as it is, and without any explanation as to how it was made, has been, not a stirrer of new effort, which is the one saving thing the world needs in this as in all departments of noble work, but quite the contrary. A man of strong skill feels helpless and overpowered after reading some time in it, just as one does after reading a period of literature in a library. If all these pieces were the shaping of one mind we might give up trying to understand anything, and also abjure all efforts at making on our account. These are the thoughts of the strongest of us. Actors say it takes a lifetime to know a little of their much vaunted and by them little understood idol; as matters seem in this

aspect it would take Methuselah's. Goethe himself had to put Shakespeare's 'works' aside to save him from being destroyed as an artist. Indeed, his coarseness is to be ascribed to the fact that he did not know what was Shakespeare's own writing, and copied too much from the others; but his gretchen he saved pure though fallen.

There are differences in men's powers, certainly; but they are not infinite; and, above all, they are not of the kinds here, as opposite as light and darkness to each other. Put aside the idolatry of a Hugo, or any other. Open mouths are suggestive of soul rusticities even though the Aeoluses do blow 'men who laugh' and Bothwells on their pompous ships into the sea of human life. No man's circumstances, learning, genius, or growth, will explain the difficulties: and if the book could not be scientifically shown to be the produce of different men's powers, this writer is a curse, and not a blessing, to an artist, and ultimately to many others deprived of the artist's toil; he is a demon, not a poet. Homer, though he may be a collection also, as Wolfe believed, and Coleridge also from absence of subjectivity and the possibility of its being like *Arthur's Tales*, was of a simpler time and culture, and we can understand it. Virgil, Dante, Milton, all the first spirits whose work is known historically, are at once recognisable wherever we meet them. Of our own times, there is not one who has not the characteristics frequently showing themselves, by which we may know him, and love him personally. Byron, three fourths egotistic, is Byron everywhere; Shelley material sublime, almost spiritual throughout, a brother to Schiller, as unimaginative and more fanciful,

for which opinion Ruskin and Macdonald are supporting; Wordsworth childlike inspired but inartistic often to helplessness. Such a many armed spirit as the Shakespeare of everyday literature and thinking is, no matter for the findings that have been made, cannot be sympathised with; there is nothing personal to lay hold of. He would not be human if there ever could be such a phantom man of so many facets to his diamond cold glittering impossible soul.

It might seem unnecessary to press so much all this, that is well known by Shakespearean students; but the belief is like all popular doctrines a fanaticism, that has done, and is doing, infinite evil in art; and if again and again opportunity is taken of showing that the real poet is quite a different figure, it is wisdom for the sake of oppressed artists, and of the people, who are shut out from new life-creating art by this oppressive shadow that has grown, and threatens to remain long, a darkness over the many.

That a vocabulary of 21,000 words (Masson making it 15,000, however, by his quoted authority, who has a peculiar method) should be the armoury of this one spirit, whose learning was notoriously not extensive, while Milton has used only 8,000, with all his thorough and wide training in several languages, and many of the best voluminous authors have used less than 4,000, are facts that the large quantity of dramatic writing cannot reconcile. From so myriad directions come such a flood of words, musical and not, that the minds and tastes of varied persons and varied periods must be looked to as the fountains. The consequences of their union are to be detected in many ways, and have the right lesson.

To read the book acts as paralysis to all our own efforts as artists. Goethe from personal experience approved of Byron's shunning Shakespearean study. To read more than one of these plays in a year he thought destructive to his own power of composition. Two of his plays he says he wrote as forts of shelter against the invasion of the Elizabethan. Scholarship of the kind now too general was not then so common or available, and there is great perception in these feelings of Byron and Goethe, neither of them knowing, unless the latter after his special poetic work, except possibly in the dimmest way, that they were not dealing with an individual poet. Milton in his youth seems to have had the same experience when he wrote these lines of '*An Epitaph on the admirable dramatic poet, William Shakespeare.*'

> 'For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
> Thy easy numbers flow; and that each heart
> Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
> Those Delphic lines with deep impression took;
> *Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,*
> *Dost make us marble, with too much conceiving . . .*'

Indeed, the well known magniloquent admiration that is supposed to flow, and does flow, unless it becomes too great for utterance forsooth, when the subject of Shakespeare has to be dealt with by speech or writing, has its origin in this ineradicable chronic confounding of many minds with one. The half cultivated are peculiarly open to magnificent mistake in this field, knowing neither what the work actually done by the individual is, nor what the highest poetic praise really is. If any single soul should write after this manner, he were no poet at all, but a monster, such as the French once thought they found.

Harsh discords ever and anon, as happens with all united effort, show that so high a poet could not have the sole making of this collection. It is the substantive work of the spirits of a time, with additions from all previous cultures. Of the general unity of the thought, daily mixing with each other, and the finishing skill of the playwright, are sufficient explanation.

Lamb's pathetic sentences must have had their origin from his over intimacy with the plays, and from his exquisite sense of what poetic art was, so far as his steps could reach. His critical power were established if only he had criticised as he has done Johnson's dullheaded speech, 'To read *Paradise Lost* is a task;' or if he had but realised as he did the lofty meaning of the curiously ineffective, the common playwright would say, ending of *Lear*. At every turn clear intermittent lights part from this gentle sympathetic feminine mind, as to what highest literature is; yet in the places where the remarks come there does not seem nearly sufficient direct cause for the sudden wisdom. His latent thoughts are the gems of his intellectual produce; and no doubt they owe some of their depth to the company he kept, and to the eager searching time in which he lived. A careless reader will miss the best of the essayist by their idea that he is altogether simple, just as he says people do who think they understand Shakespeare. These sentences are the reflection of strong feelings in struggling to know the great, perhaps greatest, Elizabethan. 'The habit of too constant intercourse with spirits above you, instead of raising you, keeps you down. . . . You are walking with a tall varlet, whose strides outpace your own to lassitude. The con-

stant operation of such potent agency would reduce me, I am convinced, to imbecility.' Yet this is he whose defence of *Paradise Lost* against Johnson's crude prose was so exquisite, the poem being to himself the joy of his soul! With Milton he had no tall varlet difficulties. Very evidently he suffered, as Goethe, Byron, Coleridge, and many another did, from being wizard ridden by the huge English popular phantom, which, like all phantoms, lives long after the proof of its non-existence. Not the monster of variation, but such a sweet single poetic characteristic soul as the real Shakespeare was, the same cunning poet in whatever character he conceits, would have been the easiest of gentle companions to perhaps the best English critic of the feeling by which poetry is made. Without doubt Lamb was the *reader*, at all events, that a poet would have for his choice.

In our own times, as to partnership dramatic writing, if a few cultivated spirits, having opportunities of representation, as the Elizabethans had, would live in similar relationship, such results as these plays would come again: similar fire of wit and words, similar hap-hazard sorts of climaxings, similar strength of phrase, similar ingenuity yet amateurishness of manufactured plots; amateurishness, for it is clear that the men of that time knew not the philosophy of art except by feeling and unsteady guess. Such fellowships are walls of iron to each other from criticism, especially if it is hostile. Above all, there would from these unions come the appropriate speeches of the different grades of society, which is the strongest and best general feature in the Elizabethan drama. Two heads are better than one, and three than two, and so up to a

certain number, if applied to dramatic writing; and no remark more clearly distinguishes between the qualities of poetry than this, for solitude and singleness are the conditions of all noblest production of thought. The failing in modern work of this kind has its cause in want of fellowship, and in the too strong desire, especially among smaller minds, of transmuting thought into gold for themselves as individuals, not by second but first consequence. Beaumont and Fletcher were an ostensible partnership which, seemingly the strongest case, was only the last step on the path of decay to the single dramatist again. As everyone knows, popular painting, music, and novel-writing are not only very possible under the company system but actually the most successful. Dumas is perhaps a better example than Erckmann and Chatrian, for there was, so to speak, more of him numerically, but the latter have been great successes, and we have some examples among our own perhaps often too independent men of letters. Only first class minds can do best alone, and they come but in ones like the phœnixes after periods of five hundred years.

If it were a matter to be desired, as it is in some degree, certainly the road to the improvement of the secular real life or, rather, vulgar everyday life drama, is just here. Some of our latitudinarian blind clergy, even to bishops, who do not know that actors and actresses can smile with one cheek and hystericise with the other, very unwisely seem to wish such advance as would open urban theatric dissipation to sensual dull idle priests. Drama is intentionally a simple popular instrument for the least effective and least useful of

the populace in most part, Dutton Cook's verdict being that modern playgoers are only the young, and it requires consequently to be tuned to a low general by no means perfect state. In speaking of Elizabeth's time, Hume should have said that the drama was a sign, just as brandy and soda may be, not a 'proof of high civilisation.' When a play becomes poetic, it addresses the few, and leaves the many for which it was properly intended. The intellectual who wander about theatres oftenest do so because of accident and whim, not from desire: their wants are supplied otherwise.

Shakespeare's interpolations of his own and sometimes of others' high imaginative visioning, are not the parts the groundlings, as they once were, or as we have promoted them, the gods, get delighted with; and in so far the mistake is to offer such pearls. It is for the groundlings of society that the theatre is absolutely necessary, and the true trainer of them up to better things does not give them but the food that is sufficient for them. The theatrical writers of that time also had too strong an infusion of poetry in them for the theatre; but they had great bluster and energy, which might have had best outlet in dashing Spaniards into other kingdoms than those having bournes; and their effect as dramatists was not therefore lost. Where Shakespeare's finest poetry was added vacancy became the general effect. When popular culture may be thought possibly higher, there still is the difficulty with these dramas of too much poetry. 'Elia' thinks that *Hamlet* acted without the famous soliloquies and speeches would fill houses better than the play as it is.

This may be the secret of the Dryden and Cibber, the Garrick and Halliday 'improvements' of Shakespeare. They were all men of good common sense, and meant to meet facts as they seemed to be. Belief in their theatric institution implied belief that audiences were to be secured, and the actual increase of audiences proved to some extent that a want was being supplied. There is more than fashion here: there is a permanent necessity of human nature in certain cultures for garish show; and it is the practical man of understanding's point to supply the demand for his own business benefit. In plays like these there is too much of thought and poetry for ordinary actors to display, as for a sufficiently numerous audience to understand and enjoy for their elevation. Both classes may be full of respect, and generally are so, for such art, but just as the vulgar feel in the company of the distinguished, so the actors and audiences in the presence of deep feeling and thought. In each case they do the same thing, flee the meetings.

One great use, perhaps the special one, of the manufacture of plays by fellowships, or by successive improvements, is that from passing the judgment of a crowd, excess of personal individual beautiful things is for present purpose checked. There is no running into lyric corners allowed, nor clear and away flights into ethereal epic skies, the facts always appearing to some of the company just as they are. Another related advantage is that the small crowd stands always nearer the outer less learned one that is audience, than does the single enthusiastic dreaming true poet, and the appeal is therefore more direct and effective. Goethe and Schiller had, like

Shakespeare, advantage of close relation to actual representation: but all three were too poetical to arrive at highest popular dramatic success; Schiller, the least poetical, being the best popular influence from day to day, because the weakest. Let anyone read of the paternal method of Goethe in Weimar theatre now without laughing, if he can. Dante's 'like to like' proverb is a barrier no power can destroy.

The bad effect of what was the general idea of Shakespeare as dramatist, this being supposed to be the choice of his inmost soul, has not only kept the theatre goers out of their right aliment, but it has done worse evil with the artists of literature both in England and Germany. The early attempts of Wordsworth; the later in life unfortunate ones of Coleridge; Schiller's struggling in these paths, against what was his proper genius; Tennyson's sudden fall from the poetic firmament in *Queen Mary* and *Harold*: who can tell what it has done in limiting and degrading the production of the best music of those nearly all purely lyric spirits! Generous criticism, if it had at all existed, should have warned these men into their own kingdoms, for the immortal benefit of their fellows by the genuine work of 'shining in their place' where is the 'true content.' By Coleridge's 'drip! drip! drip!' in *Remorse*, before it changed its name of *Osorio*, and some of its best parts, those blindly pushing him into a field where he could only call lyrically, not speak intelligibly, at last felt something incongruous. To understand so as to express the griefs and joys of society is the first requisite of the dramatist, and he was a foreigner there.

No wonder Goethe's instinct told him, though he did

not escape scot free, that there was danger in submitting to this gigantesque Polypheme, which fable invented, in spite of well known long known facts, for champing to blood gouts the living souls of the poetic companions. Odusseus and the chosen ones only escape under the bellies of the silly sheep that do not articulate but the one critical song and act 'follow my leader,' the numerical annotators not knowing for one clear moment what advice to give a serious worker, with all their nice care of small matters. They who win wisely out into the freer waters of poetry from both the theatrical cave and its popular monster, the false and not the true Elizabethan, may be pardoned if they in their joy throw back mocking cries, at the risk of a huge rock getting pitched into their flying boat.

All which does not go to side with Rousseau's savage philosophy in his wholesale condemnation of theatrical spectacle as debauching all true action, Molière's influence having not the slightest power of making society shrewder! The very condition of civilisation is to get manners or skill to hide the feelings, so that the greatest amount of as beautiful work as possible may be done; our pleasures only being the preparatives for spiritual and all other right effort, if we only saw the meaning of things. Tact is the oil to the wheels of the car of society. His general naturalism of sophistry landed him in this absurdity, though certainly it is helpful to read his long letter or indeed treatise to D'Alembert when he had proposed a theatre for Geneva, Rousseau's birthtown. The real character of the secular drama, as the waste sister of the muses, will be seen through his words. That, however,

she serves a good purpose is as true as that generosity and freedom, to extravagance, in some individuals of a society, are necessary, and healthful beside, for the general broader welfare. There is no actual world without its night, its cloud, its storm, to make its day, sunshine, and calm, the more beautiful. Moral education needs to have suffering as well as pleasure for the better life.

The opposite extreme to Rousseau's is Wagner's fond dream of bringing back modern nations to the religious unity of the sole theatre of Athens. By the very ideas of their great populations, cities, and facilities of intercourse, they must subdivide all arts, including those of worship, amusement, as everything else that individuals do com bine about. Such unity is of the youthful state of small nations. This theory of his is simply rising towards epicism, which is always getting away from the many; it is a reaction in the direction of the old Greek drama, not a forward progress. The progress he seems to want can only be made among the few, and, lastly, in the study, with pen, musical graver, or brush. When, as in the heaven of infinity, the elements of distance, time, number, and education count for nothing, he might have his unity of the arts, and all crowned by the marriage of music to thought, or, perhaps, only angelic cognition. On earth, and above all in the incongruous individualities of the theatre, it will ever be that the finer the music, the less the thought, and also the reverse; therefore the ideals rise highest when one thing has main purpose. A little music invites thought and poetry: too much music destroys poetry; thought departs. The protestant quarrel with music has fact under it, for without thought music

becomes the devil to degrade and make sensual. Burns could not sing to save his life, not even his neck verse; Wordsworth had no perception of tune; Guthrie, one of the best specimens of sonorous and artistic modern oratory, could not hum a note; and Shelley, the lyrist of lyrists, as some have said, had a voice like the sharpening of a saw. Too much music debilitates poets; too much poetry debilitates musicians. However pleasurable, music is of the senses: thought or poetry is of the soul. They cannot be joined at their highest or nearly highest on equal and enhancing terms. They are born together as sense and thought are, but they tend to separate as elevation by culture leads upward. Amusing it is to see Wagner piteously complaining that though Goethe said the ideal of musical words as of opera was the highest, yet he wrote all but childish *libretti* for some actual operas. The heaven of silence and beatific vision is a higher thought than the heaven of angels harping with their harps, divine dream both. Wagner, Schopenhauer, and Lotze have got from Goethe, and not so much from Kant, their theories of the unconscious, or last height or depth; and if he was not quite clear as to his own philosophy, they are at least equally obscure. The poet's instinct was better than his philosophy. It can be said that highest thought is no thought, but Wagner would shun this, for highest music may be no music. Is it not the fact that painting and all the arts must degrade before the theatre will admit them? Poetry does not escape the same doom when it enters there, and Wagner never will get over this fact. Neither is he striving after the highest music nor the highest poetry, and his gallant

effort as it succeeds will only take him away from popular audiences, to gain him one something like what attended the Greek trio of dramatists, but with this immense difference, that his select Atticans will only be a passing phase, because they are artificially not nationally generated, whereas the soul of religion was the substratum that kept Athenian epical, and indeed musical, drama, in existence for a little. If to the classic green trees the periods were short, what may the dry expect? Will not the first wind of new popular interest or change flatten them for ever?

> 'Neque harum, quas colis, arborum
> Te, præter invisas cupressos,
> Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.'

Neither will they live in European civilisation, cypresses nor conductor's rods of Baireuth, though the gardener is able and gallant as his nature and gifts prompt. But no man can get the whip hand of the necessities. If his magniloquent attempt at eclecticism of what arts were never intended to eclecticise but on low and to them degrading grounds, raise the methods of popular amusement a little indirectly, that is quite enough to expect. As to giving any original help to art, the man is incapable who does not see that the purer each separate art becomes, the more it confines itself within its own clear lines.

There is the mass of minds who would be happy to raise for themselves a god to worship from the combined gifts, and it may well be added crudities, of many writers, the Nebuchadnezzar dream image, with head of fine gold degenerating downwards to toes of clay, a Shakespeare which is as purely imaginative a creation, in the destruc-

tive not constructive sense, as was the Jupiter or Apollo of the Greeks, or as were the legendised prophets of the Hebrews. There is also the class of keen, and keenly human, minds, who see that supreme spirituality is to lie close to the reality, and above all the reality as shown in the man and the poet. To find a soul that has close simple deep steady relations to the sincerest moods of the spirit, is the one object worth highest effort. Mere heroics are but for the unintelligent vague souls. To the truly cultivated they are, for most part, not more satisfying than are the east winds for general vivifying support. It matters not what fine passages may be pointed out in the mass of the plays; they are many, but they are only graftings on the wild olives of others; they are the produce of sudden artistic perhaps rebellious more than really original moments. Conceiting dull pieces was a special literary department of effort then. The ingenious though often strangely contradictory artificiality of the plots is mainly due to the fact that as actor as well as manager and author he knew all the roads and byepaths to effect.

Yet there is a field which he all but solely occupies, where his own genius not only carves the walls, but may be said to build the structures. His early poems transfigure or metamorphose into the lovely *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the true poet has his highest development in the wonderful epic, despite its dramatic aspect in external shape, *The Tempest*. In these we have the gentle thoughtful ingenious eager but never violent soul, and from them we see how his instinct is one with that of the great workers in his kingdom, the epic poets, Spenser,

as might be expected, being of very similar though less swift less intellectual but more metrical type.

The rodomontade skeletons of Latin and Greek revived historical incident, cousin efforts to the hybrid historical novel of our day, were the fruit of other souls, more academic and dusty than his, though very likely he put some human flesh on them, or, as his envious traducer might say, he 'bombasted some blank verse' for them, being the 'sole Shakescene in a country.' His classical knowledge, meaning Roman and Achaian lore, was small indeed, Ben Jonson witness, who also has it that he was only peer to Lily, Kyd, and Marlowe, not to Spenser, Chaucer, nor, by implication, to the sledgehammer laureate. With our English histories he had some stronger sympathies, though, that he only set their armour and weapons into shape for the theatrical battle the people loved to see, cannot be denied. *King John*, perhaps the most Shakespearean, as the phrase goes, of all, is traced easily to old and older plays, like not only in shape but in sentiment, the admired Constance style of lamentation for her boy not being at all certainly his. The Falstaff wit has more of academic and chambering flavour than he and the jest books could brew. The origin of the low-speaking characters, like the porter in *Macbeth*, about whom there has been as much unnecessary discussion as about the third murderer, is not to be looked for in a poetic mind of the kind here met with, in a mature, or even ripening, intellect of idealising characteristics. They are the wild foam of youthful experiences and imagination.

In his famous essay Farmer has shown with sufficient success the state of Shakespeare's learning. He deals

rightly with a host of absurd almost fatuous commentators who think that if a man does not know Latin, Greek, French, Italian, he cannot have a thought that is worth having. In treating this very subject Pope said, wisely, as he could characteristically enough, that languages are not learning. 'Bohemia, an island,' is just what the truly poetic spirit would likely say, to protest against all merely mechanical pedantic fixities of history, geography, or dates. Is not this the royal road to the pure ideality that is pure reality also? Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει, is Aristotle's famous confession; and, by the same reason, poesy is truer for man than the raw facts of statistics or sciences. Prolific Calderon does similar unscientistic things over and over again; and does not Michael Angelo make a Roman faun or a semi St. Nicholas of the Egyptian Moses? The 'hateful incredible' can be gloriously conquered only homœopathically. There is a learning that poor book-worms, talented men, deadhead antiquarians, positive rockfish, *et hoc genus omne*, know nothing of, which poets all, writers, sculptors, painters, musicians, dancers, even actors and orators, have. The ecstasies of fine souls are the flood tides of human excellence. Farmer has extracted long passages, and implies that many more could be found, from Plutarch, Holinshed, Montaigne, and others, copied into *Coriolanus* and some plays beside word for word, only with the necessary arrangement of them into the measure of blank verse. Translations, and especially from the Italian, were swarming then to the hands, such work being the fashion from Chaucer down to Spenser and to himself in *belles lettres*. What Shaw says is likely true

that of every Shakespearean subject from other tongues translations existed.

It is little wonder we are overpowered when we try to understand this volume artistically. Though the few know all these facts, and many more, it cannot be too often said, for general readers, that they are being led a macabre dance of artistic death, in their usual threading of this forest of thought. If now at this present time we arranged into plays the best pieces of thought that could be used from all the dead and living writers available, and should leave them for two or three centuries to unify, no critical interest being taken in them for long dark periods, never any vital examination showing their genesis in that time, we might bequeath 'another of the same' to our astonished and, if like us, jubilant just because deceived descendants. Turning the prose and rhyme into the measure and rhythm of blank verse: the necessities of declamation would teach more or less *that* art to any ingenious spirit; for the aim of blank verse is no other than arrival at perfect speech, the admission of as much music or harmony as helps, or at least does not weaken, the sense, and no more. It would be neither herculean nor bezaleelian task to make a composition, in the shape of a play, of past and present thinkers, at this stage of the world's history, that would better, like wine, if it could only be kept hidden in some cellar similarly for the lucky future generations. Science, however, is abroad, that must take up every plant twenty times a day to see and know how it grows. The tree of knowledge brings death yet, good though it may be if wisely and not irreverently meddled with. This is the science of those Cicero calls in

his *De Senectute* the *minuti philosophi*, who would argue him out of his belief in immortality. *O præclarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cœtumque proficiscar!*

It can be thought that all this is the stripping a king of his glory; but we have had enough of the cheap showy kings, with large merely popular sham-metal crowns, and other not very appalling insignia. The better hearts, and they are getting more numerous in these times, are coming to value a king most who can trust to his own single manhood, without accessories that but disfigure and hamper it. We make of this poet a higher one by far than he was when lost in the waves of mere howling commonplace dramaticism. If he has had the fortune to be most spoken of through the work mainly of others, it does not honour him as, to take a famous case, the naming of the New World does Amerigo the geographer, to the hurt of him from whom it should have been Columbia. He would have been nobler apart from such pot house immortality. The sentiments of men infinitely his inferiors have had too honourable a place under so far-reaching vital eternal a name as his. He is the purest most original and, as Lamartine notices, the least directly indebted to Greek and Roman culture specimen of that Saxon, of that transcending Gothic spirit to which we owe almost all that is special and valuable to us as a people, and for which we are of highest interest to the world. Classicism, using the term in the French acceptation, is in his mind, but it is of faint colour. He had the true guess or insight as to the essential nature of universal classicism, of which the vision of Juno, Ceres, and Iris by

Prospero's skill is sufficient proof. Goethe is a fuller minstrel of Gothicism, or of that greater part of it that is the Doricism and Etruscanism to the Atticanism and Catholicism of England, but he is not so fresh calm clear perfect an interpreter of its mysterious sweetness and solemnity. We know not yet wherein the strength of our national strong man lieth. He has to be vindicated as one of the world's clear seers, perfect thinkers, sweet singers, who have grappled with the problem of existence, and have heroically conquered; who have fixed for ever the absolute idea of their time for the joy of all times; who have earned their seats in the highest heaven of prophets and makers.

There are cool talented people whose distinction is that they think they are able to see as far as, nay, further than anyone else, even to the extent of being equal to positively saying there is nothing possibly to be seen beyond what they prospect. To the weaker and to the young souls these look very imposing with their big brave words. The sarcastic necessity of their position, in assuming omniscience, and the free, too free, use of that mocking spirit which is soon caught for their service as chief and safest supporter of loud charlatanism, are excuses for their violence; but it is heavy responsibility to have some of the choicest spirits as martyrs, so far as they can make them so, to this bigotry. Spenser's best expounder by far has been mocked at by several of these surface philosophers as 'ingenious,' and a host of the terms from the ignorant ironical essentially cowardly insincere vein. One or two of Warburton's best hints about Shakespeare have suffered at such hands, though he might be placed

with Hobbes, Bacon, and Newton, as perhaps England's strongest clearest heads in prose. The wonderful common sense of smaller brains is apt to take their owners very quickly from the palaces where the anointed ones are kings. Like as with Shimei of old, no work is more pleasant to them than going on the hillsides of flippant moderation and respectability, cursing bitterly the Davids of literature and of true life, especially if they happen to be the temporarily supplanted ones who to worldly eyes appear wholly and finally unfortunate, their supplanters being the long haired seeming beautiful hysteric feminine spasm-echoing mere musical wordmongers. The days generally come when they apologise abjectly enough for their rash premature slim conclusions, perhaps suffer for them. The air of originality is too strong but for free gallant adventurous spirits, who have the courage to pass a range of hills before they hear long detailed careful systematic reports of the dangers, wild beasts, giants, monsters, no-roads, and similar troubles that are sure to be met with beyond. Red tape in literature is a chilling killing thing stopping the circulation of the hot but healthiest blood of genius. The temptation often enough is to act exactly opposite to scientists' science to be sure of getting the true science. A great cricketer may not strike the professionally proper strokes, but he does the successful, and therefore correct ones. The most apparently disorderly pieces, such as guesses at truth, provincial letters, occasional Goethean or 'Novalis' notes, are often worth hundreds of the supremely regulated spotless volumes, like most spotless things, having 'precious' little blood, or anything else that is good, in them.

There is no greater hater of disorder than the man of genius; for this is the one thing with which he has eternal battle; but he has other ideas of beauty and disorder from the diurnal makeshifts, no matter how fine eyed. Pioneers ought always to be privileged persons, so that there may be new work and new food for the many, spiritual and material. The more timid but useful teachers will get something to do that is valuable in following the strong spirits, and in encouraging the weak, that they ought to lead forward ever, and not preach death to, or stereotype. The line of usefulness of teachers must be drawn somewhere among the parasitic commentators, and all below it mercilessly kept out of the higher kingdom of beauty, as out of our civilised and purer living countries we have hunted out primæval vermin. A harmless fox or two may remain for scientific or social purposes; the human game is fair, whether the brute is so or not.

The best example perhaps to be met with showing the limits and comparative weakness of mere talent or head work, though in its kind of the highest rank, is to be seen in Jeffrey's idolatrous, and, as it is so, necessarily indiscriminating praise of Shakespeare, when he criticises and commends that puerile echo of Lamb, Hazlitt's *Characters*. After some far too much celebrated long paragraphs of blind eulogy which has no measure he ends thus: 'In *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* all Eden is unlocked before us, and the whole treasury of natural and supernatural beauty poured out profusely to the delight of all our faculties.' He saw the promised land no better than this, though such nearness seems enough to induce deep melancholy in considering

the limitations of birth. There is truth in this sentence of his quite other than the flash rhetoric it was to him; but the kingdom of fact and glory whose open gates he stood so near was darkness to his eyes, eyes constructed for a lower heaven than the epical one. 'In the beginning was the word,' had no meaning to his soul. 'In the latter day are the words,' is the keynote to the gospels by the Jeffreys. Few Calebs or Joshuas have yet got into Shakespeare's Canaan.

> 'Genius, the Pythian of the beautiful,
> Leaves its large truths a riddle to the dull—
> From eyes profane a veil the Isis screens,
> And fools on fools still ask—"What *Hamlet* means?"'

So said Bulwer the brilliant, with more force, forward and reflex, than perhaps he meant, his own sight not being of the very keenest in this kind, *Hamlet* by no means being by himself a reded riddle, though it were, which it is not, the greatest and noblest problem of all problems in literature to solve. The open secrets can only be read by the wholly gifted. It yet remains a question whether there may be an inner system of nerves in the improved play, as some have tried to prove, only to get laughed at, and in all probability with justice, for it has on the face of it too much popular appeal, and had too many hands to its making, to be what such theorists think. Bulwer Lytton, however, through his study of Goethe, and much more, of the far less powerful, and therefore, for him, more companionable Schiller, had his eyes half opened to dim vision of inner making by creative souls; but he was only a kind of bright dependent schoolboy, ever bringing up his exercises to the greater masters for approval, never

completely trusting his own heart as to their value. How could he be a poet with such servility of soul? *King Arthur* is a *thème* only. *Zanoni*, a strange mixture of Shelley's utterly absurd romances, with the two Germans' art criticism, and their imperfect art creation, proves that he had been in the favoured regions of thought; but he has not the will, strength, or skill of a first master, though he, with all the flippant criticism there has been of him, was, like the other rich young man, not far from the kingdom of heaven. The same difficulty destroyed them both. Indeed, it is the final test. Do you trust your genius to the last depths or heights, under or over the feet or the heads of every authority, human or other? is the question that must be answered with entire affirmation by the heart born to do most good to his fellows. Sell all and follow yourself, not only know yourself, Socrates's evangel, but also produce yourself, is the highest gospel, because it means, live the universal life, the divine self, the source of all wholly beautiful creation. Self glorifies into all and all into self and the felicity with its produce reigns. Blessed is the individual who reaches such goal. No more do things browbeat him. He is the unity towards which all contradictions set like the tide for the endless harmony. His authority is divine.

CHAPTER X.

LINES AND LIMITS.

Venus and Adonis, with *Lucrece*, and, to some extent, *The Sonnets*, show the young intense poet not in possession of his genius, except that essential part of all poetic temperament, close-embracing description, grounded on feeling of the imaginative sensuous kind. All loves are strangely like to each other, should they be the writing of apocalypses. But no soul can stay, if it is of the first class, in this external admiration or reverence; he must have his initiation, or, if you like, conversion, or divine mixture, in order to living beautiful production. After what passion suited the depth of his nature there must be correspondent action. In some of the sonnets we can hear the farewell tones for the entrance upon the journey through the region of full poetic power and genius. Of the youthful poetry whence these pieces are, blind love, singleness, and thrill, are the characteristics. In the present instance there are budding signs of coming breadth, of the true second, it may be infinite, sight; but, on the whole, such products are better not put before except the wisdom of the wise, who know their real value, and do not look on them as directive, or indeed healthful, to the general. When there is stay, especially in the case of

young sympathisers, in this raw gloom of dawn, not without its beautiful saffron streaks, the consequences, as we have had enough recent examples to remind us, are the unnatural unsightly schoolboy growths that, when brought out into the sphere of the full life-giving sun, die, and create plague, from their lax impurity and pale excess of straining after the false phosphoric light of pleasure caves. The necessity of living drew this poet from these, if to be dwelt in, deadly dens; and by and bye, after a stormy passage through the sea of commonplace dramatics, he found the higher poetry.

Superficial treatment considers all writing to be dramatic which has the mechanical shape traditionally devoted to the drama, as if the printer were not the servant but the monarch of art. This leads to many kinds of darkness, as everyday remark proves well enough. Drama for the modern popular benefit has no higher god than chance; and there is no rule as to its conduct that is more applicable than the abused poetical justices, though they are not absolute. The epic or divine comedy must end in glorious fruition, from Bunyan's ill hidden constructive method to the art that cannot be detected but by highest artists. *Ars celare artem* has its explanation thus. The very nature of the drama demands that its subject, and the expression of it, be partial, whether for mirthful or tragic purpose: the epic poem is wrought in the free universal regions; and its finish, if according to the best art, must invariably be of the paradisaic complete character. Goethe did not see this in his first, perhaps not in his twentieth making of *Faust*: the secret came to him only fully when the poetic vigour was enfeebled and woodenised

by age; so much so that his second part of *Faust* is but philosophy, the accurate work of head without heart, conventional degradation from his 'Indian summer.' Unfortunate Wagner and many another German, Jobs in ashes and never in their prototype's phœnix way to rise from them though they think themselves Jupiters of modern Olympuses, have sat and howled this kind of dead song like dogs who lose their master and will know no other, poor dry stubborn didactic affectionate but brainless creatures.

Milton in his best most poetic work, *Comus*, has embodied a divine comedy to glorious purpose and perfection. Thyrsis, the father's shepherd, the heavenly moral poet, not the twopenny tract moralist, perhaps the Bunyan temper has not a tint of his glory, comes to save true chastity, whom philosophy and theology, her brothers, have allowed to mix with gluttony and comicality of the base kind. He and the brothers rescue her, Sabrina, the goddess of the Severn, being the final help to the chastest life. 'Drinking water out of a wooden bowl' was the highest symbol to Milton of complete temperance and supreme devotion to beautiful upward longing life. But God forbid that the teetotallers should squat on this beautiful natural continent of nature's temperance. *Comus* is a world epic much more artistic than the *Paradises*; it is not a drama but to mechanical eyes. By great souls it may be considered as a drama, but only in the sense that humanity is a drama, which is the epic view.

It was a sign of Milton's early poetic standpoint being changed towards rebellion against true shape and restraint when he abused rhyme as unfitted for the *Paradise Lost* and for all master writing. Dramatics require the nearest

rhythm to speech, and it would seem that the epic does need some bonds more than drama. Shakespeare breaks out of rhyme, it is true, in *The Tempest*, his most epic work; but song, like Ariel's, comes in to show that more than rhetoric is required. The *Paradise Lost* theory is caused by the later darkness of its poet that makes him eclectic of old dead Hebrew, Greek, and Roman harmonies instead of native new European ones, and especially that makes him more rhetorical than poetical, the same decline as Euripides made from best free art. *Comus* is of far finer quality than the larger pieces. His unreality all through his life, the attempt after puritanism, or monasticism of soul, in everything, was his weakness. The best manhood has humour its faithful attendant to keep it in regular paths from all madnesses of supposed goodnesses, real ills to man. The full blood of youth enriches his early works and makes them deeper powers than any of the late. With a much more pronounced and vulgar regicidal spirit, Walt Whitman hates all form of restraint similarly in our time. The noblest spirits live on the most highly finished forms as being nearest spirit. The violent purists would not, and consistently could not, love woman for her presence and person; she is but an instrument of momentary exaltation for them, and then immediately as an idol she is a horror. If extreme realism is in danger of being brutality of love, such idealism extreme becomes the cruelty of death. It is not human but devil's love that thinks so of personal relation. Is this the ground on which the prophets of life stand? It is a wild fanatic land. No etiquettes, W. W.? Then your literary epitaph is written. Your expressed special comfort in the

presence of fishermen and carmen may be understood with altogether a deeper meaning than society reason of 'like to like.' Verily while such a prophet is that of America, if he is so, no stone dolls, or books of the shape that makes books live, or painted colours, will trouble the well swept and garnished house of union. Its best thinker, Emerson, has allowed the political contemporary spirit of his country to master him also in this matter. Wordsworth's dark thought and rebellious that poetry and prose are the same thing eventually, as if he had said noise and a musical note are the same thing, has found a new expositor of a more definite aim. If America's ingenuous young spirits follow Walt they will follow will of the wisp. The good that is in him comes quite in another way than that he thinks. He is a warning to us to hold by form, but also one to us not to let our hearts always worship the old forms, which, by nature, die. Let the fit maker take no hint from him, nor from Milton, nor Wordsworth, nor from the revolutionary critics of France, as to poetry being about ready to break into the free breadths of prose. As well might they protest that the blue round dome of the sky is to change now its harmony for little scientific necessities, for facilitating possible ballooning and modes of travelling, or for food production generally. When ideal monarchy, the never dying theocracy, passes, there may be no difference between the kingdoms of prose and poetry; when all heads and hearts will weigh equally, there being no children, no old people, all of one strong age for ever, prose would rule all things well, it may be; and procession, harmony, grading, the causes of poetry, might be put out of account as having no

existence in such a republic of equality. As life is, we love our idols of worship, of infinite differences of purity; and the highest poet, and first man, is he who can make the most shapely, and, therefore, restrained images. Rhyme, rhythm, assonance, alliteration, the best workman manages most tools. He, further, only uses them when he needs them. To genius his measure comes as his skin came to him. Above all, he does not slash at his statue for chance results, like the Whitmans. By all means slash backwood trees, but with them skill is better than roughness. Have we not seen that spurting workmen are the idle ones? Ideal heroicism to unlimited degree spoils weapons, exhausts the toiler, and does more splutter than work. Prophet of the revolver, though he does not know it, himself gentle, it would seem, he should restrain, perhaps destroy, the specially Californian inspiration, for his own and his nation's good. Earnest he is. So are the men of the bowie knife. But are they to be the more applauded for their sincerity? Souls can be knifed too. If, however, he is doing his best, God bless him, and God send the counteractive. Not a few are doubtful as to the glory of 'ploughing ways,' Milton's phrase of Cromwell's work, when they try to show the path of duty and grace by beautiful obedience to, and respect for, poetic and national growth. There is danger in laying axes to the root of the wrong trees. If all that is is not right, neither is all that is not.

Unpoetical men have been lately piling up a platform of metrical probabilities about Shakespeare's growth, that have had inspiration from some such source as the Miltonic theory of rhyme. The last work, *The Tempest*, is

the least rhymed; and there is, they think, a key to the order of the production of all the plays by the quantity of rhyme in each, as showing what is mature from immature. What Milton meant, and Shakespeare knew, was that epic work needs less rhyme than lyrical, because its high enthusiasm and limitation by thought founded in fact keeps it within bonds sufficient for it, and its dignity goes in greater volume than couplet breadths could hold. The songs of *The Tempest* are signs of the further poetic appreciation, which Swinburne's killing judiciousness in dealing similarly with Shakespeare missed, that the epic itself needs lyric rests, and possibly picnic conceits on the journey, to keep it from monotony, fatigue, and strain. Secular real drama is what needs rhyme least, if it wants even measure. The highest epical seeing will become lyric or crying in its love of rhymes and music generally. It is blank verse when rhetorical speeches and narrative are required. In 1861 and following years what pitiful amazing struggling had Arnold, Wright, Newman, Blackie, and it would almost seem, though no journeyman, Tennyson, about verse generally, but especially as to translating Homer. The fact is that no man *will choose and succeed* in lyric verse or epic unless his thought is naturally epical or lyrical. It is not improbable that for an artist the less he reasons out this matter the better chance of success. The true life is no doubt, if progressing nobly, first lyric, then dramatic, lastly epic, in prevailing mood; but genius makes all three free at all moments to its appreciation and effort. Had there been written in youth an epical piece it would have been mostly unrhymed, likely more so than *The Tempest* actually is. This rather scatters the plod-

ding planking and scaffolding of metrists and of stage-struck divines, who would discover in at window, instead of by loving entrance at the door, all the poet's history, order of writing, periods, advances, declines, and other such futilities. The cunning of poetry is the proteus that these sharp-sighted flaxen or grey good boys of the upper forms will not pin down, with all their well intentioned eagerness. Life cannot be found with the most skilful of scalpels, not with Huxley's nor another's. How is it that artists, just as the babes are said to reveal praise the wise and prudent do not see, strike strokes in youth that they never afterwards equal, though they may make general advance? Let men reverence poetry, and if they do truly, they will not set themselves to arithmeticise it. Shelley began with epical blank verse, though evidently imitatively, not by instinct of art, if it cannot be explained in this way, that prose was the right medium for his screaming. Shakespeare and Milton seemed to like it in their days of experience. Spenser never cared for it, either because he never rose high enough out of the lyric state, or because his grandeur of temper was not grand enough to blossom into variation, as Goethe's imperfectly did, epical though it ever tends to be. Keats, the Raphael or Phidias of England had he lived and progressed, young as he was, chose blank verse, and arrived in *Hyperion* at as great epic mastery as English perhaps knows. It may or may not be that Shakespeare's *annus mirabilis* was his last, and that blank verse is the height. But what of bombastic Marlowe, then, whom Swinburne so absurdly mates with Shakespeare? *He* talked tally enough and

blankly enough without much feeling or knowledge. So that the metrists are on very slippery ground indeed.

This is quite similar territory to that where there is discussion about the relative excellence of swift writing or slow and careful. Without subscribing to Ben Jonson's judgment as to the supposed Shakespearean habit of writing off thoughts at one impression, never to be again touched, it is as unsafe to go the other way with Milton, when he thinks the flowing of the easy numbers of Shakespeare is a 'shame to slow-endeavouring art.' The truth in most discussions of these kinds lies between extremes. The care he is known to have expended at different times on *Hamlet* shows that there is no rule in such matters, and that practice differs with times and circumstances. The *Æneid* is now twentieth of the size it was while being shaped. Yet Ruskin has great and just faith in the first free final stroke of an artist. There are, undoubtedly, happy hot soul-stripped, so to speak, moments of effort, that never can be excelled or improved upon, just as Paganini's strokes of the bow were best at their swiftest; but to a whole work in colours, shape, or words this does not apply. It is a lyric excellence rather than that of the master. No man can be at such temper through say a whole play. Ben says Shakespeare *had* filing heats.

Here is the pitfall of the whole school of spasmodists who would make poetry wild 'speaking i' the air,' as it has been cleverly called. Spasmodism is a true stage in the growth of a first spirit. Alas for him if he makes it his home. Continuous intensities, like even Shelley's poems, being rather wishing to perform than performing, are failures in art, as his own knowledge that he had not

the power of the greatest masters indicated with precision: though one would wish to agree with every word Macaulay says of him in the essay on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the best judgment yet by far of this genius. Such Marlowean green work as Browning's *Paracelsus*, *Sordello*, even *Ring and the Book*, Bailey's *Festus*, most monstrous juvenile imitation of the great poet of *Faust*, and Dobell's *Balder*, is the absurd development of sheer intellectual and mechanical rather than truly emotional and powerful thought. If Pope and Dryden are good for anything more than another, and they are profitable, though to the head only, in the didactive sense that a specially good logical speech, leading article, essay, or sermon is, it is to counteract the stress and strain of mere will poetry; but to follow them as leaders would be just as fatal, more so, to poetic culture. Pope is a shrewd wit and cool pungent philosopher, *ein metaphysiker*, Lessing holds, but far more a man of the world in the best meaning of the term; and Dryden was simply, for his time, a vigorous essayist, whether in prose or in verse.

Between the road that leads to prose and the one to chronic spasmodism, there is an opening which the fewest find, that has in the kingdom it is the way to, men of light, who are equally reverent of inspired moments and of continued complete labour. For them there is neither 'talking i' the air,' nor merely material earthly ventriloquism, as of Hebrew sufficiently prevalent wizardry. They are of the heaven that is on earth, and of the working free band whose labour is play, and play labour. Here is no fancy, but the most scientific of all truth. Few indeed of our English poets are continuous dwellers in

this land. Their amateurish or occasional character has been with lucky judgment expressed by Hamerton in his sketchy amateurish books on art and intellect. He is bold, it seemed, to say Chaucer, Milton, and Shakespeare had poetry as side labour of love, rather than vigorous intention of art; and undoubtedly there is not the absolute fullness of devotion in any of them that can be seen, for instance, in some of the Italian artists in colour, stone, and words, who are the equals of the Hebrew prophets in honest ideality and their superiors in manhood of deed.

Our chosen critics hardly touch on the true sphere and work of best art. Matthew Arnold is not valuable to the artist, whatever he may be to the assimilating cultivated section, in his criticism of the inner poetic shrine, as nothing shows more clearly than his piquant talk of Hebraism and Hellenism. No matter where or when he may be born, the sufficient artist, of the great type, passes quite through the Druidic or pastoral, the Egyptic, Hebraic, Hellenic, Roman, Gothic, or Christian states before he comes to have the power of first class immortal making as a free soul. He has no crusts of this kind to cramp him. Of bucolic Burns, Lytton has said, with entire truth, that his simplicity has in it the best 'characteristics of Greek art,' 'one of the most correct poets the world has ever known.' Even if he did steal much from James the First of Scotland, as genuine a poet at least as, and far more original, if less copious, than Chaucer, he put the jewels in new perfect settings. And Burns is only a child of fine instinct in the kingdom. He, like Titian, is exact, tender, and person loving, but, likewise, both are reckless, immoral, desiring physical life more than spiritual.

It is all easy to keep essaying on the national differences in distant time and place; but would a clear seer tell one that Phidias or Sophocles had a single thought or intention artistic at all different in kind, though it may be ever so much in degree or variation by external accidents, from what, to take moderate examples, say Canova or Tennyson, had or has? The real and sole differences between the artists at all times and in all places are the extent and quality of their knowledge and sympathy. It is absurd critically to talk so much of Hebraism and Hellenism; they are other, or, at all events, similar words to devotionalism and spiritual manhood, to lyric and epical. In the path of culture every man that reaches to the best kingdom passes through individual states of mind like those vague terms; but art, as Freeman so well says of history, is a unity: it is of one temper; and the artist is of one mind for ever. The state or the republic of the soul has one type only if the leadership is gained, if the Μόνος rules. What makes popular difference is that works are from varied depth of personal ability and culture. Each art has the exact sisterly lineaments, but each is a distinct personality; there are no two-headed nightingales in art as Wagner's pedantic, not the less so because of the enthusiasm of some *virtuosi* for it who know not the beat of the general heart, quackery would make believe. 'One of the most striking signs of the decay of art,' writes Goethe, 'is when we see its separate provinces mixed up together.' And again, 'The true artist isolates his department.'

It is as possible as ever it was to see and carve a *Venus de Medici*, *Apollo Belvedere*, or *Laocoon*. The man and

the devotion, these are the requirements. High arrivals are close embracing and securing of the archetypal; no more. Symonds's groupings of the Greek dramatists into rise, progress, and decay, from national reasons, are university development futilities. He has too little imagination and genius to see that it is the birth of a man that is the one fact in art. When we get the soul that energises as far into the unseen archetypal regions, he will bring back to us in actual shape as great beauty, possibly greater external excellence, for it is not absolute that these Greeks did embody to the very last perfection, at least in material, the idea alone being perfect that one glorifies for himself out of the embodiment which is its immortal symbol. We talk nonsense about pagan and Greek and Christian art. Wordsworth's cry that he would rather be 'a pagan suckled in his creed,' shows that he did not know that 'pagan' refers not to masters of any place or period, but only to peoples. The truth is art is higher than the popular religions called hebraisms, polytheisms, christianisms; that is all.

Hellenic art, in the general popular sense of the term, is itself not the highest art attainable; for it fell ever and anon into cruelty and hate to humanity. Poor individuals had to conquer its exclusiveness by dividing beauty into pieces. Greek women saved their self-respect, ay, almost their very existence, a beautiful Phryne or goddess out of the sea being the queen of females with them, by any accidental single beauty, gladly, as by a beautiful ear, hand, mouth, arm, or foot.

There is yet quite other analysis of Greek art to be made for deepest truth's sake than has been made. Winkel-

mann's enthusiasm was only a kind of blind puerile partial affectionate perception of the root of the matter as to poetic ancient art. His going gloriously crazy about the supreme forever unapproachable excellence of the ancients meant neither more nor less than that at Rome he found, for him, the highest arrivals in art, the nearest copies to the archetypal in the human imagination, he being judge. A greater mind might demand nearer closer embracing of beauty than Rome, or Athens itself in its Periclean prime, had any sufficient hints of. The fact that these broken or worn pieces of beauty appealed so strongly as they did to the German, is valuable in no way more than from its being a proof that the ancient excellence is completely attainable to a true modern genius, if he, having gift, will only submit to, or rather embrace, the further hard toil necessary to get into the regions of innocent form, expressionless emotion and thought, paradisaic purity, poetic divinity, perfect shape. Perhaps few in these centuries have been so near to the needed sympathy as Winkelmann himself; but his critical faculty, it would seem, could not awake to a creative one. Learning neither destroys nor brings the creative power. A child or philosopher may know what is called conversion, and so with the awakening to art. If Lessing had not so sharp and, as he himself has said with curious truth of perception, so unpoetic an intellect, in some respects he was still nearer to the inner spirit. Both were like Plato, who, the Agrippa of art, was almost a widest world poet, but remains perhaps for ever the first, the most loving, and most glorious of critics, an eye, not a heart for production, the microcosm and macrocosm being the chiefest of the books he valued. The German critics were not far

from the best things of what man has. Had they been trained artists, by choice or even by accident, and not by fate left to be what are less, critics, we might from themselves have had some modern art of the same quality as, or fuller, than the admired ancient. When a noble soul strips itself for thoroughly original work there is no limitation, but freedom, ease of the boundless kind, if the trust in himself is supreme, and if he has faithfully toiled to manhood of power, and towards the particular exertion of his strength at any time. Enthusiasms like those of Winkelmann, Lessing, not to mention the critical far more than poetical admirations of Goethe and Schiller, are the strongest proof of the unity of art, and therefore of the propriety of exactly equal enthusiasm for the moderns.

That sculpture is a dead art, although Emerson has added his authority to the saying, is complete misapprehension. When a new poetic universal idea is born, it will never rest till it has some part of its development realised in this way. Homeric poetic philosophy had its fuller results in religious allegorical drama and in sculpture; the Christian dogma in Italian painting and in German music; Gothic or Scandinavian poetry by its union with Christianity, in the cathedral. A new idea will, according to its original vigour, when it is spun out, as a begun world, into the space of human life, reach all departments of art, and perhaps arouse, brightest of possibilities, new ones that weakness or immaturity has left hitherto in obscurity. Assuredly no discovered method of beauty like sculpture will be lost while man recognises his birthright and only life for his soul. To the house of beauty this sister will not be a lost one; she is no maudlin.

Chastest of the chaste, she is less fallible than her sisters painting, music, dance, oratory, action.

It is by no means meant that there may be expected to be found a *Transfiguration* or a *Venus of Milo* in every annual national gallery, or an *Antigone* in every monthly list of publishers. No; only in the hundreds of years do the tides of genius reach their height. Yet here also heaven's order is not discernible. There may be at any period elect souls, or one great soul, as it may please the divine universal movements. Shakespeare has shown that processional harmony, expressional arrival, whether in word, stone, colour, or otherwise, is forever attainable by the genuine energy of man, the individual, without distinction of place or time. Original nature, genius, and applied effort can always enter beauty's kingdom, and bring thence immortal all-sufficient embodiments for men. Let us who know what art is not lower our flag to half seeing cries as to superiority of Greek, Hebrew, or other genius, for any particular department of artistic excellence. The one difference is whether a nation shall have an Orpheus or Amphion anew to tune its civilisation to the deepest music. If the Jew has been tough and persistent he owes it to the sublime poet Moses, really a slave in the supposed worst of surroundings, a national decay, as of Egypt then, who wrote not only poems of speech and song, but the poem of a nation, for cycles his thought making new poems of living souls. This creation is the real ambition of all strong poetic hearts, or, rather, the necessity that makes their lives of any value to them. Even at his fifties, Mahomet, surrounded with moral and social death of all idolatries and poverties and

crimes, could not put his heavy burden of being the Arab prophet aside, in other words, the intense lover of his people, the poet, the arranger of human things to the divine order. Phidias, Praxiteles, Sophocles, Homer, Virgil, Dante, Raphael, Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, Handel, are equals, or at all events they are all free, and therefore their work, whatever it is as to quantity, is at their purest moments of one quality, the saving, the immortal, the substantial. Width and depth of emotional intellect in any soul are what bring salvation to the people, by art fully flowered in all its searchings after beauty, which is the refinement of what is good and great and joyful. There is no contention, no selfish struggle for existence between the beautiful sisters of art, whether sculpture, music, or some yet unwaked darling, or why not darlings? that may come to bless human seeing, feeling, or other sense, physical and spiritual.

It might again as ever be said truly and remindingly, 'O London! O Paris! or O Berlin! thou that knowest not that thy poets are thy only prophets, and therefore silencest or starvest those that are sent unto thee.' The new conservative aspect and answer of the same chronic question is to let the chosen souls die in the cold north and western climate of heart good in the way of execution as the Jew mob with stones were in the land of milk and honey. How long will the dark masses of men be blind to their best benefactors? Pericles was the gardener who brought Greek art to its full flower, and the Italian popes and rulers were worthy of the gifts of great men they had. Have our Shakespeares, Chattertons, Keatses, and Shelleys had any national bosom whereon to lay their 'dear heads,'

the only sufficient rest for such souls? England has hitherto been but a stern foster mother to the children sent with life and ambrosia to her from the unlimited lands. The old serpent, let it be never forgotten, has not died; he has only changed his skin. The tragedy is ever going on. Yet the people are kind, if they could but know; ay, they can kill, with kindness as well as carelessness, the prophetic fated plants. To be sawn asunder, to be crucified, to be made to drink the poisoned cup, were the old ways; to be choked down by envious ignorant or simply stupid scribblers, by rhetorician sophists of dying mythology, who are workmen little worthy of their often very large hire, or to be lionised into the conceit of spiritual death, is the fate of him who is a living soul, to do good to his fellows with every word he utters till he is silenced. An Italian sage told young Montalembert that if he must have truth he could get it only by martyrdom. There is poverty, there is riches, there is the hoarse laugh of the fool, there is the cruelty of unpoetic official pharisaism, so mixed in its good and evil, and a thousand other hounds immediately up for the blood of whatever new original souls. The bravest of the only truly brave, at best the artist of first gift can only have a short race, before it is again darkness for him, though there be light left for his fellows. Not the least dangerous of enemies is his own spirit, especially if Hamletic contempt for the little breed of men should once effect entrance to influence his action. It is then with him the shortest question of time. The death of all deaths comes should he lose faith in the infinite dignity of man, of the worst man.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VISION OF LOVE.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, which in its title is as near day dream as it can get, was Shakespeare's first really complete visioning of the higher spheres of truth, *The Sonnets* not being clear enough in form. Theseus the duke of Athens's marriage to Hippolyta queen of the Amazons, after conquering her woman's will, every right modest maiden from the savage to a queen loving her youth's liberty, and requiring to be caught, is Shakespeare's way of showing the noblest ideal of human love. The legendry and sculptured battles of the Greeks and Amazons were this same thought's embodiment of old. The highest Greek or cultured leading soul must conquer Byron's

> 'Headlong, headstrong, downright she,
> Young, beautiful, and daring—who would risk
> A throne, the world, the universe, to be
> Beloved in her own way, and rather whisk
> The stars from out the sky, than not be free
> As are the billows when the breeze is brisk.'

These two are the main subject of the dream. But life is a wide thing of varied experience, and Lysander and Demetrius quarrelling and at cross purposes and finally making it up with Hermia and Helena, form the under

currents which make the royal love flow more grandly. It would not be a wide guess that the meaning of these four names etymologically, in what Ruskin thought a rough way, but in a far finer than he then knew, not being clearly aware of the plastic self-organising nature of language, enters largely into the composition of the characters; the ladies' names, in particular, expressing, the first, the most frequent result of love depending on secrecy for its consummation, and, the second, of the love that trusts too much in physical beauty. To these interpretations, however, let each give what poetic appreciation he or she may think fit. There is less room for discussion about the stronger lines of the poem.

The fairies are neither more nor less than the spiritual personification of flowers, the breathing of living souls into them, by the faculty of creation; for no objects play, and rightfully, so large and beautiful and emblematic a part in the history of high free racing chasing human love as they:

> 'The token flowers that tell
> What words can never speak so well.'

Many a writer and painter have felt this dimly and unconsciously but truly; and perhaps, though parish popular theology has damaged sadly his gift, a serpent he cannot clear himself from, none has been nearer to seeing the Shakespearean metamorphosing here than Macdonald, his imitations of fantastic similarities being all but the true poetical work in this sphere. An unconscious feeling of the same deeper dream of all life is seen in Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*, though he knew not what he did. Shakespeare felt in within the national life till he found

the vein of fairy thought strongly beating near and entering the heart. His train of dream went back to the first influences of sun, sky, earth, in raising life, just as it did with the Greek and all deep artists. The days of marriage near or within the Druidical temples, possibly as tradition has it in the Orcades by joining hands through one of the standing stones, as much Teutonic worship perhaps as Keltic in the further times, join to the Elizabethan celebrations. Whatever earls or countesses stood symbols for the ideal, is not of poetic consequence. The worship of Baal, of the sun's powers for benefit to man (if by corn, Demeter, if by wine, Bacchus, if generally, Apollo, to Greeks) still wanders in unexpected shapes; and the poet who wrought where these fairies came from, saw Elizabethan Christianities as but variation of the essentially religious human eternal soul. Compared with the *Walpurgisnachtstraum* of Goethe, which owes its origin to knowledge caught almost at life's expense for momentary seeiug from the visioning of this maker, the fairyland of the 'dream' is paradise to a West Indian luxurious but fever breeding island. All the English divining is none the less fact that it would be impossible to follow Irish and other Kelts in believing that the Mab, Lear, and so on, are of their special cosmogony and mythology. The historians and antiquaries divide and divide, like other scientists, for that is their business, and forget that the blood of all men flows, has flowed, and will flow through the human heart. It is they that have kept men fighting, and if they have none, nor could have, to master them and their knowledge, far better would it be for all republics to expel them. But there ever comes the complete

man, the Merlin to do miracles, and with their instruments.

Puck is of a different species from these fairies, because he is the poetical personification of the goodnature which improvises the thousand pranks so helpful and decorative to the completion of the man-woman, the Adam-Eve, the Faust-Helen, the two-one, the eternal mystery of humanity.

Those Athenian workmen with their outrageous drama of sensational love, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, display how when love is in the air, judgment of art, dramatic popular art also however simple if only well meant, down to the art of simply laying a knife on table, is put aside, or at all events is of the gentlest most indulgent nature. All goes merry as a marriage bell. The smallest amusement can metamorphose into the greatest; the cottage becomes equal to the palace. There may be satire of the humorous human but earnest kind, as the ass's head hints too plainly, of reigning amusements and dangerous perhaps false art, implied by the Bottom Company; but it agrees well enough also with the poetic sweet gentle kindly genial thoughtfulness, to understand the chief intention of showing how love glorifies the smoky rafters of a nuptial hut, as the fretted ceilings of the chambers of kings and queens, at the most human of ceremonies. Kindly love also

> 'Æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
> Regumque turres.'

That there is parodying, for inner motive of the whole play, as Ulrici thought, is quite imperfect interpretation. Nothing is more scientific and serious, with the divine seriousness that joys in the summer sea of love to all men, than every word of this piece of art.

With such general foundation, the whole 'comedy,' which is one of the most simple and most finished, to each word, of the kind well named 'divine,' is bodied forth, the poet's pen turning facts to imaginative shapes with the tricks of strong imagination. Not till after the inevitable struggle, which is the price paid for everything that is good, do the three couples enter on earth's true living. To the furthest detail the unity of the play may be completed. With the light of these indications, the thinker who loves to see the secrets of things can discover in its structure a force and thorough racking of joints which will give him the idea that the work of the truly illuminated artist of musical words is of all human effort the most genuine, strong-nerved, and heroic.

It may be remarked of the fairies, that to be humanly interesting they require to be male and female, as indeed plants are in reality; and, this settled, Oberon and Titania must, for artistic satisfaction, all organic life having similar history, have their quarrel and make up, like those they patronise. Titania's little boy page, refused to Oberon, and the cause of the quarrel, may be the troublesome Cupid, Bacchus' Indian boy; and while she would not let him be Oberon's, in and for peace and calm, why, no wonder the Ovidian progeny of evils, vegetable, animal, and elemental, came from their debate. Beastly love, unnatural likings for monstrous Bottoms, seize even pure hearts; and all is sad decline and coming fall. Without true love in high and plain ranks, this earth would be the complete wilderness, with no fruits, material or spiritual, but poisonous ones. Through storm and sunshine, as things are, with favouring powers,

'fortnights' may be found for man, the paragon of breathers, in which to hold

'Solemnity
In nightly revels and new jollity.'

The consummation of love's joy takes place on Goethe's Walpurgis Night for his evil spirit display, May Night, as would be expected by those who have perception of the delicate kind; a fact in itself to hint strongly the nature and meaning of the poem.

Blundering dull Skottowe shows by his own prelections how it needs another soul sense to perceive in this kind. How forgiving those must be who have the gift of sight, needs no statement. His criticism is that there are four histories in the 'dream,' bound with the slenderest ties. Theseus and Hippolyta should not, as Greek hero and heroine, be united to fairy legendry. The four secondary lovers are similar and monotonous. Theseus acts quite beneath dignity, after the hunting, up to the end, in laughing at the players. The players are absurd as being before a king of Athens, at any period of its history! It were almost worth a lifetime's work to have the fun of seeing a prosy spirit like this stumbling round the to him impenetrable labyrinth of poetical beauty. If the opposite to what he says is taken, strangely enough, the truth is sometimes reached. The joining of Greek Theseus to fairy legendry is one of the most poetic intentions in all Shakespeare's work, meaning really that the world of poetry is an eternal one, not limited by time or place, only by the seeing power and creative force of individual poets. High minds are to themselves their kingdoms with regard to the rough footings of all merely external

readers. No barbarians clamber into their capitols. That the cackling of some, who do not be useful but indirectly to intellectual seekers, tells by contrast true tales after passing through the alembic of other thought, is fact. Over the hands of fine players neither enemies nor dunces can look. The mixtures of heathen and Christian symbolism in Dante, Raphael, and Michael Angelo's work are eternal puzzle to the dull. To the sympathetic, such mysteries show the oneness, the universality, above time, space, and nation, of the human and divine problem.

But more than enough of prose unmelodious footing, however tender and refined it would fain be, in this loveliest of gardens of the virgin union of young brave and fair soul.

CHAPTER XII.

WISDOM'S PEACE.

The Tempest is the finest sincerest closest most continuous piece of imaginative thought in the English language. It was, from its date, very likely written by its author in the quiet of his native scenes, in the sweetest of Patmoses for constructing one of the apocalypses of time, after mature experience, having little or no worldly worry or trouble to make his symbolic picture less clear and decided. If we except the inessential suggestion of the Bermuda shipwreck, and the use of the passages from poetical Lord Stirling and from Montaigne, the poem is his own, in outline and body. It is the last of his work, as Campbell and nearly all else suppose, *The Winter's Tale*, which some think to be later, being only an adapted novel, in any case. There is a strange superstition that when a man has done his best, young or old, his days are numbered. It was a belief of Goethe's, which he illustrated by the lives of Mozart, Byron, and others. All is not superstition that seems so. The Greek pythia under the physical influence of some earthly vapour may have been as spiritually exalted into seeing the future as any of the raptest Hebrew prophets by any waters of Chebar. There is more in heathen religion than our narrow apolo-

gists have the least inkling of; and the day is not far away when it will be seen that a higher idea shall put all popular religions in their true, subordinate, secondary, and almost equal places. Whom the gods love die soon? Do the intense spirits pass on to other spheres after as much work as they could have done?

> TROILUS.—'Hark! you are called: some say the genius so
> Cries "come" to him that instantly must die.'

A beloved young Hallam rests him on a sofa beside his father, and in a few moments is in the ideal lands for ever.

Ariel, for better reason than Caliban, must also get 'a new master.'

But guesses apart, nature being now, and at all times, so sphinxlike, communicative only to the inspired, the masterpiece of the poet is this, not play, except in the high sense that all truest work becomes play, but epic, or, clearer designation, divine comedy. The noblest most poetic view of universal human life is that of a comedy whose essence consists in an introduction of the actors amid darkness, savagery, storm, falls of various kinds, to this world; a journey onward through mixed struggle and rest; and a final arrival in the western lands of delight, where wounds and bruises shall be healed, and the conqueror crowned with full honour in a heaven of freedom. All the master thinkers or true prophets of mankind, the Hebrew poets from the author of *Job* to John, without exception have caught this thought that is built in the eternal unchangeable regions, though it overwhelmed most of them when they tried to put it into shape. The torture and lamentation of spirits

struggling to bind the many wheeled universe, for the spiritual purpose and insight of men, had mixed with them divine tones which their fellows knew by sweetest inward experience to be life-giving, because the music of heaven. There is no preacher or teacher yet from most ancient or from the most modern tripod, let it be the daily newspaper or a New York pulpit, but whose one justification of living on the physical toil of the many is that he, at some periods, distant enough in these and indeed in all days, touches some note of the eternal harp, either through love to those who had fuller power, or it may be from nature's kindness to himself. Life as a thing of eating and drinking and being clothed, is not worth the having to the crudest man that exists. Prophecy, if of the weakest kind, no better being to be had, is the eternal cry of humanity. Let science advance as she may, and it is our safety that she does, the divine is still above and around her with equal power, and as inscrutable as before. Sublimest of mysteries, whether Hebrew, Greek, English, the virgin, the pythia, that is, in other words, the elect human soul, genius, must feel the god, and the result of the immaculate conception produces new word for the spiritual life of men.

Few indeed can command the bright vision, and take fair complete shape from it. Ambiguous enough are the oracles when the priests of talent meddle too much, fearing with their small hearts that truth is imposture. They would drive God out of his own world by their wretchedness of apology. It needs the strongest purest soul, an inspired man, to live with the knowledge near him that the infinite may open, to his right or left hand, at any

moment. Milton, excessively musical Milton, this glory overpowered, his *Paradise Lost* not being perfect intellectual embodiment. In a dim unconscious way it is a divine comedy, from man's fall to rise; but it is not from actual living individual existing man. This is the failure of the poem as an epic; and which *Paradise Regained*, a far higher realisation, has just missed rectifying. The masque of *Comus* is his highest effort of the kind as to form, standing on a pedestal of similar construction to that on which *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is placed; both poems being of the same complexion, the one the celebration of the single, the other of the doubled chastity. It was Dante who fought most gallantly with the monster of insufficiency; and perhaps, on the whole, he succeeded against it best of all men the world has yet seen. Skilled Lammenais means that when he says he is the 'sovereign poet;' though *The Tempest* might almost claim first place over Dante's work, if only precision and clearness of thought, and not also fulness of world events and knowledge of art were required. Shakespeare did not but write religious drama in the end, so far as outward shape is concerned; whereas Dante took the supreme last step into the epic domain, not in fact only but also in form. The wealth of religious reference in Shakespeare might tell where his soul was working, to shrewd readers. For his definition and glow he is second to no poet or prophet. The great Italian wanders perhaps too far, as the schemed magnitude of his journey might be expected to tempt him: the Englishman, with native vigour, yet with insufficient knowledge of the past, walks too straight to his end; but he has the gentle charming magical power

which cannot be opposed. Goethe's *Fausts*, nearer our own times, richly laden with modern thought's relations to all time, and pre-eminently because of this, of such influence, are nowhere in the characteristics of precision and distinct realised intention, when compared with the exact quick vital intense infinitely kind and sovereign sight there is in *The Tempest*. The wild young hours of Goethe and his set, after discovering Shakespeare, bore fruit of the dramatic shape, when, had the German been stronger, he might have made a new fuller advance, and escaped what was the Englishman's block to the neck, the theatric mode of writing. He is by *Faust* not so far advanced even in form as his reverenced master is in *The Tempest*. Shakespeare is in it displaying by furthest intention to the highest minds, and not a useless word he wastes.

Lamartine had a faint notion of something these days want similar to though fuller than this apocalypse; but he failed to embody his own desire to supply the want in a worthy shape, *Jocelyn* being the shadowiest of movements in the right direction. Hugo's *La Légende des Siècles* is a bombastic big-brush attempt that proves corruption of the best to be ever a worst. But writers need not be singled out; because this idea is what has been the aim of genius since culture, education, worship, for they are the same, began. The Hebrew prophets, the Persian, the Hindoo, the Greek, the English; everyone of the true spirit: the author of the giantborn promethean *Job*; John with his wonderful apocalypse, owing its far more than Hebraic constructive style to acquaintance with Roman Ionic cities, and which ranks perhaps highest of

the thought obscured but imaginative successes in this kind; Æschylus with his Caucasian rebel of glorious endurance, who ultimately never becomes free victor and king; Sophocles whose every play is a philosophical moral allegory, from the Antigone or husband hater and lover of family to excess to Philoctetes the man of money and of torture with it; even dear weak but true when most blaspheming Shelley with timidly realised *Prometheus Unbound*, his nearest frantic if valuable approach to the poetry of the sages, though his diaphanous limbs were broken by the triangle of that executioner of inconstant incontinent highfliers, law of reality: they were all, as individuals, consciously bound to the flying wheel, whether Ezekiel's or Ixion's, of a puzzling universe; with, in them, the infinite difference from lower natures, that they continued to their last breath to try to riddle the mystery, to invade the divine, to embrace the beauty, to secure the fruitfulness of heaven for themselves and mankind.

The Tempest is Shakespeare's work in this highest field, that of prophecy divine. Is it a small thing that we have English guides through life for greatest hope? What keeps this piece from taking precedence of all other writing is the fact that to him, through the irony of his literary fate, the vision of the world was but poorly filled with the knowledge which deep historic universal culture can alone give. He had to build almost solely from his personal history, and this causes him to lose that richness of worldwide suggestion, which comes from the using of all previous poetic work and previous narration of fact, in the masterpieces of such poets as Virgil, Dante, Milton, and Goethe. It is matter of fateful regret that he, with

his clear thoroughly sane close grasping loving intellect, should not have had exact and extensive acquaintance with all the past machinery, so that, the natural excursiveness of his vigorous somewhat 'wild' intellect being restrained to shape, his best of all epic plans had been filled up to its full living power. The helpless copyings of Virgil and Milton he would have escaped, the littlenesses and monotonies of Dante he would have avoided, as he would have shunned also Goethe's lumbering talent toil through and with not the choicest poetic selection of matter. Too much of the best vein of this the greatest recent genius is overlaid. His musical faculty, like Carlyle's, was deficient, affecting the finish of form inevitably. Poe in speaking of the transcendentalists while analysing *The Raven* exactly hits Goethe's limit: 'It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.' *Prospero*, for this can be the name of the epic exactly as *Faust* is that of Goethe's, is less indebted to previous work than was the *Prometheus* of Æschylus itself; and indeed its originality, its wonderful purity, as well as high argument, are the most majestic counterparts of our English thought to Æschylus's sublime Greek dream. Our dawnlike Shelleys and Schillers, though they dazzle us, are but eblouissants, thin material colourists, in the presence of those first souls, as indeed they themselves know, and in the case of the two have acknowledged. The divine comfort in being near the greatest ones by communion of reading or thinking, is that they never browbeat us with

mere intensities, expansion not compression of soul being the kingdom to which they give entrance. After being with them we feel as if for us also is reserved a piece of master work to make, perhaps greater, or at all events richer, than ever, because of the fuller time.

Shakespeare took up Spenser's method (indeed that of the period, as of all periods which are really poetic, and especially the Greek culmination) of naming his characters: but, with deeper poetic appreciation, he hid them more; because, on the principle of *ars celare artem*, or on the truer principle, *ars conservare artem*, he aimed by best deepest most enduring and last intention at the highest most skilful intellect, not merely the contemporary but the intellect of all time. No mythology so scientific as his has yet been embodied. Ariel is the strength of God, the mount of the Lord, David's Zion, the holy hill, the Capitol to Rome, the Parthenon to Athens, Mecca and its holy stone to pilgrims, the Hebrew title of a city, the 'city' being to the Jewish poets the consummation of all genius's desire, Jerusalem the precious stone and golden sky vision. Ariel is also the altar, and, most of all, the fire on the altar, as the live coal to Isaiah's lips tells. Ariel means *genius in its prophetic fruitfulness*, the sole revelation of the infinite to finite dwellers on this green ball in the blue sky. One of the Schlegels thinks it is a personification of the air from the word. It is the spirit or air which bloweth as it listeth and this only. Sir Calidore was for Spenser the knight of courtesy, with the easy yet cunning way of masters when dealing with etymology, words being so flowing if vital. Beauty is the bestower of all gentleness, the sir's name teaches. Shakespeare has Caliban,

who is the destroyer or ban or curse of beauty, in other words, superstition, the son of the African black crow, Sycorax, the witch who 'gained her life' by scattering, Lamb found, Charles the Fifth's fleet with a storm from the attack of Algiers in 1540, and who 'gains' it *still*, by keeping Africa a negro fort of ineradicable brutality and fetichism that no European civilisation will ever conquer, as Hegel has powerfully truly shown, the philosopher who steals his best from the poets, and then would mount the philosophers on the higher pedestals than their masters. Miranda, the only object to truth-loving man worthy of his last admiration, of the wonder which is the highest worship, is prophecy or poesy embodied. The seeing manumitted souls, who by the love of the gods are ever young, have this Phœbean attitude.

FERDINAND. 'Admired Miranda!
Indeed the top of admiration! worth
What's dearest to the world!'

The method is clearly enough illustrated from *Pericles*, or, rather, *Pyrocles*, Spenser's fiery hero, without considering at present whether Shakespeare is its author or not, in the speech to the recovered wife:

'Flesh of thy flesh, Thaisa,
Thy burden at the sea, and called Marina,
For she was yielded there.'

Stephano, the butler, is Bacchus-loving men crowned for the revel, for the orgie. Trinculo is the mocker, the sceptic, the persifleur, the dilettante, the witless wit, the thorn under the pot, the floater on the surface of things, or, in best words perhaps, the falsely cultured. Whether there is etymological meaning in the suggestively doubtful

word, may be left to the inquiry of those who have will to follow in these fields, and faith to depend on of poetic appreciation. The old obsolete English word to trinkle meant to pry under, to tamper with. Prospero is prosperity, what our half true if rather rough priests of the outer temple, the Hegels, Cousins, Guizots, De Tocquevilles, Buckles, and Spencers, see, with the Cyclopean one eye only, as development, civilisation, democracy, evolution, what the Christian theologians call the kingdom come and the millennium, the Brahmins the eighty-four, what St. Simon and Comte imagined the second paradise of the future, the true golden age, Fourier and Enfantin and Bazard the canonisation of industrialism, the reign of democracy, what may still further be described as the fuller and fuller recognition of himself, by Narcissian man-woman, the black but comely with his rose of Sharon, in the well of divine truth, in the glass sea of an unwrinkled eternally youthful infinitude.

Injustice had overturned the rights of merit, states ruining by division, selfishness, and brutal want of love and thought. The soul had to be cast out into the wilderness whose sorrow discipline would heal. To unite Milan and Naples, poesy or musical thought and politics or practical deed, to make a new Italy, was the cause of all this necessary trouble and storm. To the English mind of those short-travelled days, laden as it was with the romantic chivalrous work of the Italian poets, Italy was the ideal land. Its modern poetry and its ancient Roman literature and history, not to speak of old ruling relation to England itself, were the crowning glories of earth to the thoughts; and the laying of the final scene there, and the

taking the characters thence, have the lessons of universality and ideality to teach. Also, how much of skilled art is there in making African Saracenic Tunis (which was the legitimate successor of ancient Italy's deadly enemy, Carthage) and its kingdom, the opposite ideal of darkness and sensuality. The Christian crusading against the Paynims is shadowed too. The marriage of a daughter, with a Spenserian name which Tennyson's instinct for words chose for an early poem, Claribel, 'the famous of beauty,' from the kingdom of light, to one of the sons of sooty Africa, a pagan Saracen of Dido's blood, is worse than matching Phaonic Othello the blackamoor with a whitehanded European Desdemona of the island Cyprus: it is the extreme in running the wrong paths of government and life. The knights of holiness, temperance, etc., in fairyland ever had to fight Sarazins of devil's land. When she is married, contrary to all true search for the higher living, ten leagues past 'Man's life,' the symbolising of marriage or connexion too far out of the born spheres, as Shakespeare tells to the ears that hearing understand, but not to Hunter's, who imagines old African towns of such strange names, it is time for revolution and new dynasty, the complete renewal of things. The abduction of whatever Helen makes the word 'war,' so that the peace which is salvation for men may come.

Here there is a binding to all the noblest thought and poetry the world has had. Not for nothing did this keen and sympathetic artist recognise the eternal opposition of good and evil, light and darkness, which is the main stream of the thought of the real poets of his time, as of all times. From Bunyan's city of Mansoul and prose

parable of good life, which is of the lowest and therefore most directly widely popular circle of ideal creation, up to the last recondite reachings of art, such as the archangel overcoming the devil by Raphael, Dürer's spiritual dreams, Michael Angelo's powerful visioning of Moses the lawgiver, John the diviner's personification of inspired influence, what theologians call inspiration, by the shining son of man among the seven candlesticks, or Dante's placing of Inferno's depths deeper and deeper under the guardianship and rule of the ancient greatest representative monsters of law, lust, tyranny, here we are in the heaven of life that is immortal, of action that is never exhausted, because founded on passion without limit. In this region dwell the only sane spirits. They and those like minded with them, from the child lost in wonder at the infinite, are safe in the regions of the imperishable. Here is the home of that muse-ruled harmony, of that true religion of art wherein humanity lives its best, which is as safe from fanaticism, or the madnesses of multitudes, small or great, on the one hand, as it is, on the other, from corruption and death of the formalism and indifference which are dead ritualism or idolatry. Christ's poetic soul gave only two symbols of noblest living, washing with water and social feast, for cleanliness and brotherly love. These he neither invented nor instituted very willingly, knowing too well poor mankind's love of easy formal works instead of spiritual vigorous life in intention or vital goodwill. To wild savagery of uncultured blind energy art is as strange as to brutal cipher and false fact loving materialism that has no further thought than shelter, food, and raiment for the body. Assuredly, the imaginative architectural spiritual temple

building poetry is the salvation as it always has been of man. It is the sole way to the truth, and it is the life. In the Hebrew prophets the only saving element was what came from this central sphere of calm, their formless spasmodic screamings but driving the faster to the destruction that their high patriotism feared. Man is not without similar examples at all periods, nor is this one empty of such. There is something higher than any personality. It is, however, only in high civilisation of the individual, of the nation, of the race, that we learn to trust mainly to man's desire or instinct after the beautiful things, and therefore after the good. Ignorant gardeners are ever cutting and pruning in their over fierceness of 'little knowledge;' and Nature's method being slow sweet sure flowing evolvent divine, she disowns their rude irreverent violences.

The 'ships of fools,' Barclay's being only one of many such vessels, were common literary machines in those days of infinite overflow of monkish types and emblems: and a storm or crisis for the universal ship, displays the world in its disordered chaotic state, its thinkers, whether Hercules, Orpheus, Amphion, Perseus, Moses, John, Mahomet, a Buddha prophet, or other compeller to physical and spiritual beauty, driven to Arabian, Judean, African, or worse deserts, to Patmoses of long silence, but now seizing their proper power. Prospero's magic book is thought, just as Orpheus's shell was. It first puts the sham hollow order of crusting dead mythology with its religions and politics into a tempest, by the power of genius, long imprisoned, but rescued from the tree of the witch ignorance's malice, and then marries harmoniously

the new shaped system of eternal fair musical truth to the noblest existing fact. Ferdinand and Miranda represent these. There is the whole struggle depicted with master power of the fiends of superstition, gluttony, and scepticism in high places, Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, to frustrate the desire of him who bringeth the good tidings of civilisation to man. There are the showing of the submission, as is for ever right, of men in false position to the true; the infinitely pathetic demand of genius to leave its master, by weakness of the flesh, before his work was done, another version of 'curse God and die,' the hint of the feebler mood, of the wish for 'dissolution into dew,' of the reading of the book of fate which would make a young man 'sit him down and die;' the vision of Juno, Ceres, Iris, the nymphs, the reapers, skilful personifications, grounded on the philosophy that art *being* Melchisedec has no father nor mother, no place nor time to limit it, showing the plenty, children, corn, cattle, fruits, and spiritual analogical harvest, that will fill the lands where truth and fact of real ideality are the king and queen; the return again after their disciplinary punishment to thought's island of superstition, gluttony, and scepticism, who, the Gibeonites of society, hewers of wood and drawers of water, are required even in the happiest times, though ever needing curbing in their deadly hatred of, and treason to, if possible, the poetic prophetic authors of true prosperity; the vain dreams of kindly hearted but weaker headed theorists, whose brains are more benevolent and intense than roomy; the shadowing of the works which are not profitable, though there be good intention, by marriage of a high sister, Claribel,

the famous of beauty, in the dark Paynim Saracen African lands which chivalry ever fought against, the chivalries of light and honour, where Caliban and his friends are always hunted when they get beyond endurance with their surly servile presumptions and usurpations, the first actually daring to attempt to force truth into his misshapen embrace; the adumbrating by the strange companionship of 'the three' how scepticism, the dweller and farmer in the stoniest most treeless fields of the understanding, agrees to tolerate hidebound superstition for the shelter it can give during storms of poverty and fanaticisms, and how gluttony most eclectically gives an arm to each, that he may be tickled at the ear as well as on the palate, intemperance having a spiritual kingdom also, such as it is; the quick changefulness of the many, who are prone to make their golden calves, wotting not what has become of guides absent even for a little, calves political, religious, and social, which seem gods to them, though in reality only monsters; the swooning divine solitary agony of sadness with drops of bloody sweat that comes to the poet, as it must one time to noblest aspirers for man, after the revels of the prognosticating sky goddesses and earthly visions of happiness, when he realises how all things, this conquered prosperity also, for which he has devoted his whole life and soul, shall dissolve, cloud-capped towers, gorgeous palaces, solemn temples, the great globe itself leave not a rack behind, for we are, when makers next to the eternal one in power, such stuff as dreams are made of, as substantial or fading as sunshine, which indeed scientifically enough we are; the conquest next over this last worst attack of the enemy of the soul; the terror the true man's

completed genius in offering its fruits gives to the three men of sin, his supplanters, the false poets or prophets or rulers of the earth: these, and many other, infinite wonders, if there are such to be glimpsed at in this world at all, can be seen in this miraculously perfect, profound as elevated, piece of art; and if they have been taken in an order quite different from what pedantic methodic talent would have suggested, it is by intention, and for this reason, that the tender beauty of every word and wonderfully far-reaching power of suggestion in the work of the transcendent master of his genius, are least degraded by making no attempt in prose to follow its constitutionally poetic condensed shape.

Much lucidity here were mistaken effort; for to make such dear and valuable things cheap, is not wisdom but foolishness: enough is done if the way is pointed to gallant spirits who wish to know the secrets of the highest minds at whatever self-denial and gallant struggle. A feeling comes strongly when in such spheres that, after all, it may not be right to expound indiscriminately, however tenderly and suggestively, what was possibly constructed on the principle of *ars celare artem*, a principle which essentially means that only the highest spirits by brave toil deserve to have the privilege of that communion of saints where everything is fully known. It is true that only the eyes suited for certain light can see in it, and this gives freedom at least to show sincere students and upclimbers some of the footsteps of their predecessors who have attained mastery. The philistines will curse, waste, and pass on to another place. That Ruskin, for example, at one of his all but fully inspired

though seldom moments, should be throwing pearls injudiciously even before such a well cultivated spirit as Matthew Arnold's, is or ought to be somewhat of a warning. At the same time, too much is often made about retention of very small literary and dogmatic pearls. The latter writer finds the former exceedingly 'provincial' when he really gets for a little almost side by side with Shakespeare, as far as seeing *how* he wrought is concerned. Anyone can find the passage in *Modern Painters* where the poet's method, 'barbarous,' as Ruskin himself from his standpoint saw, of giving names to his characters is dealt with. One cannot but agree with Arnold that Ruskin has gone too far with the etymology, especially in the Greek direction, of Hamlet as 'homely,' Ophelia as 'ministering servant,' Othello as 'honest,' Iago as 'Jacob the supplanter;' but it is amazing that a semi-poetic temperament like Arnold's is so quite shut out, if only for the time he wrote this paragraph as to Ruskin's 'provincialism,' from the sphere where the skilful energisers work. Did he ever *read* the *dramatis personæ*, say of Sophocles's seven plays? After all, one feels that Ruskin though he cannot express himself best musically in artistic words, his most poetic prose being only half work as he well knows, has far more of the elements to make the fine artist than the poet of very beautiful though extremely imitative *Thyrsis*. Argument has destroyed to great degree Arnold's perception in art. He is not quite sure, however, in the end, about the fantasticality of these etymologies, but he is very sure that there is in them the note of 'provincialism,' the fact being that here is imperfect but sharp and far-seeing all but *the* universalism that

belongs to world hearts, almost entirely beyond the critical temperament, nearly in the creative sphere. It is this that gives the strangeness to Ruskin's dark, doubtful, and, if taken in the final logical blockhead way, absurd words. Let Arnold, and many less men beside, study such passages, and they will get light out of them if they are faithful, not fickle and merely brilliant. They may also discover that friendship garland of daily ephemeralities is of all things the most 'provincial,' pedantic, French Academic, weakly associative, and unconsciously mild and impertinent. Academies are the houses of lords of literature: when writers are too limp for the world they go to the other place; if a statesman is too foolish for the commons he proves his fitness for the lords, as matters are or have been.

There are joyful tears of the noblest manliest pathos to be shed by the high seeing soul as it stands near the Shakespearean magician while he is, in reality, not in vague rhetorical fancifulness, his own Prospero; there are smiles that come only from the hearts where true wisdom has its seat; there is gentle and all-devouring love, that is unsurpassably beautiful, for humanity; there is rapt admiration for the inherent nobility of man; there is the worship of equality with the godlike and with God. Away! poor calf-worshippers! You know not the glory in the mount of thought. This man Shakespeare who is obscured to you by the clouds of dramatic smoke of raw amusement, that his soul loathed, while his good sense could not condemn it utterly, indeed felt it a necessity for popular weak life, smoke which creeps down the side to your levels till the most religious most divining soul of

the cycle seems to some of you godless, lost, a profane person, you know not what becomes of him when he is in his Prospero's garment of high art. Even his early donning of it in the sweet dream that his *Sonnets* to W. H., '"Will" Himself,' the poet or very Narcissian man, what Shelley has imitated in *Epipsychidion*, 'upon my own soul,' or 'Percy Himself,' are of an individual's highest life for time and eternity, you did not discern as other than the ordinary morning donning of the plaid of a common shepherd of Helicon. Behind that cloud of garish playing of the amusement kind, and after the thunder and lightning, the bustle and pain, of everyday living, he has heard, what only the true self-recognising son of existence hears, the still secret of the universe; and we who are wise will receive with the deepest reverence the tables rescued here for us, by which we may rise from matter's slavery to live noble spiritual lives, joyful beyond all dream, in the attained promised lands of young hope. That this Moses also has had them broken and defaced, is the saddest thing: but there remains much for the toil that is eager and loving; and to no man is the mount refused who has courage, virtue, manhood. Is it wonderful that all effort is made to rescue for ourselves this soul, deep calm strong, from the Egyptian or Bohemian adventurous battles and honours which blind seers boast to be his glory? Is a sham son of royalty and fame, common enough royalty, the dramatic of realism, one in the gipsy ranks of theatric ribaldry, one merely an adept in hieratic magic sleight, to amuse and deceive the idlers of society, necessary though the amusement and deception are, is he equal for a moment to the half clothed god-chosen shep-

herd king who brings not a mere few but a whole world of souls, by that skill which is never doubtful when there is necessity, to their Palestine of thought and life, to their El Dorado of spiritual diamonds, to their eternal happy islands of the west?

A prophet has no honour in his own country, and he came unto his own who did not receive him, are universal propositions, with meaning and application infinitely deeper than we can guess in ephemeral moods. Why need the blood of Saxondom search for its joy and highest culture from the, for us and our days, inferior effluvia of spirit that exhale from the unpractical weaker less trained natures of earlier southern and eastern races? Let us be patriotic in the highest, and only civilised valuable, sense, if we wish truly to live for the greatest present life, individual, family, national, and for the highest hope of the future. We are now, as all peoples know, first on the road of time; why should we distrust what has brought us mainly to our heights, our inherent Gothic, which most likely may after all be inclusive of Keltic and Teutonic, vigour of soul and body, above all, as embodied in our glorious literature? The true meaning of Gothic, at all events in its application to art, is at depth the same as Greek or any other genuine high arrival. We have our bible of noble thinkers if we only had that highest of all reverence and culture whose beautiful finish is the fine self-respect that becomes respect for all. Let us come up out of our Jewish house of bondage with its bitter emasculating taskmasters. Christianity was the embodied ideal which for long darker and lighter ages led men upward from hylic life; but when it tends to asceticism

or annihilation of self in the vulgar sense, or becomes an uncertain latitudinarian guide, the most damnable of all guides, a new ideal is needed for man's physical, moral, and spiritual nature. An ascetic wave passed over Hindostan leaving fanaticisms, the greatest as to outraging humanity, flesh tortures inconceivable self-inflicted. When a religion develops into gluttonies and cowardices and lies, it is even more destructive still of human spiritual and ordinary life. The crusader thought Jerusalem seen was salvation; the city of the inner soul is the only safe home.

The last inmost self of a man neither turning him to the right hand or the left is his God and guide through every place and time. At all periods the highest souls have this noblest of familiars, daimons, or Egerias, or Muses, or Ariels, beside them, to whisper the hidden truth, and whose joy at muse-visited moments it is to work the master's desires. Alas, Ariels rebel too, and the wisest men have dark times, without one star in their sky to be seen, though their hope never quite goes out that there is a heaven of lights beyond all cloud. Copernicus made the material heavens commonplace stars; man's sky and heaven now are his soul.

Lytton's curious fancy that because Minerva was blue eyed and Achilles golden haired Scandinavian and Saxon may have had Greece once as their home, would make our Norseman and Saxon, and likely Keltic also, England, not a land of no traditional skill in art. Our brave forefathers may have been, after all, the artists of the Greek glories. But dark hair and eyes are the result of tropical food. If his sanguine enough theory were right, good things may again come out of this northern Galilee, equipped as its

sons now are with all the world's knowledge and spoils. The Gothic awe in Rome's decline of the Gaulic races, Keltic and Germanic of the same blood though different dialects, at the civilisation they met, may have been the mysterious recognition of the old kinship. Autochthonism is the truth, but emigration and culture are from north to south more than east to west in Europe. The modern pilgrimaging of our Goethes, Winkelmanns, Bunsens, Byrons, Shelleys, and artistic souls may have besides the ordinary some such secret explanatory influence. But here is the very madness of speculation most likely, and Lytton's lead had better be shunned by one with the seven-leagued boots. There are safer places to travel than in the world of races; even languages themselves, which have sent etymologists, or philologists as they call themselves by preference, the wildest goosechases, are more recognisable countries. Probably the exercise may be good for us though there be no fox caught, but earnest busy men can find fuller better more useful hunting than such.

Goethe, though he felt what Shakespeare was, in one passage acknowledging himself as but his pupil, could not see the last depths of him, because he was a deeper freer more subtle soul than he. Brother spirits they are, but the Englishman is a keener clearer seer, and a firmer maker after the patterns in the mount of divining thought. *Faust* in its fullest latest development is not so universal, so all-embracing as *The Tempest*, which is, if not the largest, the most precious diamond perhaps of all literatures. If we had the enthusiastic critics, and which insight has produced, the Italian nation has had for Dante, the

Hebrew for Moses, Christians for their founders; if we had had some of these for this piece of work, its beauties would not be lying quite dead letter as they are now. Why will not our serious nobler men open their eyes to him who has sat patiently, while being overrun by trifling laudatory annotators, waiting for his high rights, for his fruition of usefulness, these hundreds of years? There is no need of hysteric assertions of his greatness above all other men; he has enough of reality in him to make comparisons very distasteful, or at all events indifferent. In quality all the great souls are equals; in quantity he is not the greatest, for in this comparison is possible. Your dramatic admirations of his toil in the island Bohemia, the solemn deeply religious gently smiling sad joyous, in one word the poetic soul that the true Shakespeare is, loathes. In the purgatory of this penance of misdirected praise, praise for work he had little, or at all events, moderate respect for him himself, richly didactic though it grew to be by others', and his own, skill; in this purgatory he has suffered long: and he is not even yet free, by reason of the weary mechanical grinding in the mill of money making, distrustful of his genius, or forcibly separated from it, or not arrived at it. Like a Samson after genuine if somewhat accidental exploits, he allowed contemporary society to cut his Nazarite hair off, the Delilah that devotes so many a noble soul; and then had his eyes put out: but his hair grew again; he got his hands on the pillars of the false temple of mere worldliness; and this last dying work of his will be the crown of his honour, the saving of many unborn races of nations, the destruction for ever of the lording tyrannies and

presumptuous rebellions of philistine saracenic calibanic souls.

Steevens first found the depths of Shakespeare's acquaintance with Hebrew biblical thought, and several have followed the lead he gave, Eaton, but especially Charles Wordsworth finding him acquainted with the theological doctrines to their depths, as well as familiarly able to apply passages to his purposes. There is more religion in our daily path than most of us dream of. We have a sacred literature as well as the Jews, if we only recognise it as patriotically as they did theirs. The oracle of Apollo is not dumb; the 'spirit of life,' the 'Zeus' of the Greeks, is now and here; the knowledge and wisdom that sees all miracles as common, and all common things as miracle, are of our English sky as of any other. Instead of elevating, as Charles Wordsworth does, our thinkers by showing their familiarity with great and wise foreign thought, let us find their own excellence.

No one knew better than Shakespeare the brotherhood of all prophetic souls, nor more freely used or gave whatever was good in the kingdom of God. How could a first soul but have his last resting place in the heaven of thought! *The Canticles* of the Hebrew and *The Sonnets* are of the same inspiration exactly. Better a thousand times than all the knowledge of Charles Wordsworth's interesting book is this one reference. Read in connection with *The Tempest* the twenty-ninth chapter of the poet Isaiah's vision. If anyone care to read so, he will see, if he has generous heart and spiritual eyes, how the brother souls energise at all periods in the same divine sphere, and with what freedom they can take assistance or give it to

each other. Imprisoned Ariels, lions of God, being interpreted, or, sometimes, cities of the mounts, achieved acropolises of individual Davids or sweet singers, genius fighting against the nations or the ages, 'artistry being battle with the age it lives in,' if Browning is right, artistry being battle with the darkness of all time, if the fullest truth be said; dreams of night visions; delicacies of food and shining attendance in the wildernesses, that have sudden vanishings; drunkennesses, but not with wine or strong drinks; deep sleep poured upon the eyes even of seers and prophets; the vision of things as they are, become as a book sealed; the wisdom of the people's contemporary wise men perishing; glorious hopes that the day will come, 'that day' always visioned as the end by the Hebrew and all first poets, when the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, when the meek shall increase their joy and the poor among men rejoice: these are elements where the skilful brain and enlightened heart of the Elizabethan toiled gloriously, though the weak, and some very strong watchers of his work, think he is one of the profane. If the secret is not found here it is the searcher's own misfortune. It lies open to open eyes. There are readers who read but who cannot perceive, God help them!

Shakespeare wrought not for any thin blooded exclusive imperfectly cultured denominational section of his fellows, but for man of all time and place, the glorious creature of sympathetically mixed sense and thought. He has no pharisaic ensigns warning off high or simple. But the attainment of such height, width, and depth is the supreme achievement of an individual; and it is a

wrong judgment to hold that all, or even a few men, can stand free to every approach, as he can, their gift and culture being so much less. Indeed, his sympathy for the weaker wilder worse of his fellows nearly lost him the last best topmost steps of his own mount, and what have been called immoralities justly enough, at all events with reference to our times, were the consequences. Yet he rose to his height at length, and no man who is wise need be exclusive to him. Sciences and religions being only for the purpose of serving the beautiful, such souls as his are of no sect. The limit of Ulrici's insight is seen in making the poet an illustrator of Christian ethics merely. Christianity, Mohammedanism, or any other system, may attach themselves to the names of poets from whom they had their first life; but the founders or poets are themselves free and irresponsible for the logical historical structures that progress. They are the sources of these machines, glorious machines for the help and civilisation or salvation of peoples, and sections of peoples; but they are above them. Sects, as indeed all the institutions of working society to varying extent, are mixed poetry and prose. The musical thinker has pure freedom in his higher kingdom.

It is in this divine freedom the right explanation of the celebrated phrase in the epilogue is to be found, that the object of art is to please, a phrase so often and so meanly misunderstood by weak thinkers. Perhaps the highest poetic or artistic mount that man may reach for a divine life, is the supreme expression of art; and the same in kind with painting, music, and the rest, is the glowing aspiration to heaven on the face of a martyr for

the preservation of the integrity of his soul. In such a dying or never dying picture to men, there is the highest of all pleasure, seeing the utter nobility of a human soul; but is there in this high art the absence of pain that the childish criticism which would seem to be the present criterion of poesy demands so persistently? The top pleasure is duty, or the shaping of the beautiful life, and it has contest as the whetstone for elevation. Carlyle's highest reach after the idea of Shakespeare's personality is not that he was a mere 'amusee,' but the 'melodious priest of a true catholicism, the universal church of the future and of all times.' But this air is too strong for the strong contemporary toiler's lungs, because they will not melodise his speech, indeed, his perception of artistic work is his weakest side as a great seer; yet let light everyday theorists think over such critical appreciation, and remember that the human spirit has infinite depths.

There is at least one shrine of native English genius where the soul of the weary thinker, as also that of the child, and that of the most spotted life, may fold wings without doubting, and may rest. Like the fabled birds of paradise, some of us have no feet, nor need them, but these are the poetic elect souls: most are like the dove wandering over the deluge; and it is a great joy that we know there is some place where rest, though only for a time, may be had. The floods ever alternate with prosperities. The Kuh-i-Nuh, or mountain of light, is an eternal Ararat with an eternal Nuh or Noah. That we shall soon have fresh vision of a new beauteous sunshine world, where we may have the fullest freedom, and richest natural and spiritual food and love our natures are capable

of, where for a time at least again the secular or profane and the sacred will bind up into one, there being then no more hell of division any where or any time, is that 'great expectation,' 'that day,' which ever is, and has been the dream of noble men and women, the embodied reality of which can be seized fully by but one soul in the hundreds of years. The time might be now. In direct contradiction to weak philosophies a sufficiently great spirit finds the world at all periods quite ready for his bravest work. Meanwhile, gentle strong true hearts are dutiful to reverence past Prosperos, who, after they had seen in the kingdom of life, in the holy of holies, in their own souls, the great marriage of truth and fact solemnised, thence retired them to their cremating pyre chariots, to their mount Neboes, to their Golgothas, Patmoses, Medinas, Stratfords, to their Milans or poetic heavens of the inner immortal soul,

'Where
Every third thought was then their graves.'

Upon the triumphal gates of their glory, for to them they are their fortresses guarding the palaces divine, upon their tombs, let us place unreproved our most lovingly weaved sincere *immortelles*, in complete recognition of our noblest human fellows. If we ourselves with our bodily eyes may not look upon their like again, or ever, when the race of man require such stars for the sky of hope, let us trust, and indeed know, that there will come others of the divine equals.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PEOPLE'S STARS.

It was because he assumed epic robes, then, that Shakespeare reached the highest English slopes of the spiritual mount. Were it not so, Spenser, Milton, and more than one of the nineteenth century poets had been his superiors. He has, however, realised and idealised to complete embodiment the problem of existence epically; and no one else of his country has yet done likewise. Mrs. Stowe, with fine artistic appreciation, though often lamed by the vacancy ignorance of antiquity causes in the American mind, says justly of Milton that he was 'a magnificent imitator of old forms, which by his genius were wrought almost into the energy of new productions.' Keats recognised the danger of studying Milton too much when he felt that his work was, instead of the song of his own country's heart, the composition of dead harmonies of past peoples. On the whole, Spenser is the nearest to Shakespeare, despite that he is not so vigorous as less men. He feels tenderly, and sees far, but he lacks the noblest power of poetic fusion; so that he is only really powerful in epical narrative, which is not the fullest attainment. It was Milton's misfortune that he sacrificed his own best possibilities. Towards the height of epic

freedom Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson alone, have since made any real attempts: but they are not full believers in their own dreamings; they have not married their visions to fact without possibility of divorce, and are therefore only lyrists. Shelley's last hours were with Sophocles, and he was all but within the charmed circle. His *Prometheus Unbound* was a kind of taking of the outside land of Midian, and a slaying of the immoral Balaams of weak instinctive prophesying. Yet he would have likely held back and died in the wilderness as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey did, perhaps gone down the earthquake pit with Burns, Byron, and Moore. If any are the Caleb and Joshua, they are Keats in *Hyperion*, and Tennyson in *The Idylls of the King*, who really both did get some grapes out of the land. Neither of them, however, has shown himself a leader; though Keats might have been one to flatten with his 'seven trumpets' a Jericho, and to raise 'topless towers' to a modern Ilium or Jerusalem.

If Shakespeare thus stands clearly above his countrymen till now, the aspect looks different when other languages are studied. Of the Hebrews, though many saw the patterns, John (the son of thunder, and yet the loved of the most loving) has created the best literary embodiment of his people. *Job* is too much the drama of a searching terrified spirit; *The Apocalypse* is the divine work of one who knows the all, and makes after the archetypes with joyful freedom. Among the Greeks very many got into the kingdom of divining; they lived in mythology, that is, in 'thought baptised with feeling,' till life of form was present everywhere. Shakespeare's mythology is

only first lines compared with that of Sophocles or Homer; though it is of as good quality as theirs. Virgil and Dante were diviners of the Greek and Græco-Hebraic cultures, as secondarily they were the creators of the afterglow of sculptors at Rome, and of the almost full sunshine of Italian non-expressional highest painting artistic sometimes as the Periclean statuary. Hebrew rabbis were of the same temper, when their spiritual life was awake, as the Greek poets. Christopher Wordsworth's *Hulsean Lectures* on *The Apocalypse* could be applied to all epic efforts, Hebrew, Greek, Hindoo, Saxon. They all are bezaleelian skill within skill. Very curious it is that this writer (perhaps the living English mind that discerns with the calm, judicial, but unproductive power best what the meaning of art, individual and hierarchical, is), after seeing John's method of construction to good extent, could believe that the poet was prophesying at all about the future Roman Catholic hierarchy. Did poetry ever give itself to be bound hand and foot by dry accidental history? Surely this was a sop to Cerberus. Unlike the clumsy conceited officials who come into secular crude spheres with art's mysteries, as if the scientific or encyclopædic minds were white to harvest, the bishop had skill enough possibly to make a prevailing fanaticism about antichrist the most deeply useful thing for the time to the culture of the people. It is probable, however, that the veil of theology came between him and truth at a certain period of his advance. Intellectual limit is a fixed bound that one can no more pass than he can jump his shadow. As to the inner lines of the deepest poetry the poets themselves

rarely know fully what and how they are. If it should be said that in modern times Wittenberg with its associations has had more influence in the highest literature of the European peoples than any other scene, the statement would seem the peak of paradox. It is not that Luther nailed his propositions up at its university; for great as was the revolution or reformation which that event created, there are deeper stronger strings to the universal human heart passing through Wittenberg. There John Faustus who sold himself to Satan so notoriously had soliloquised,

> 'Habe nun, ach! Philosophie,
> Juristerei und Medicin,
> Und, leider! auch Theologie
> Durchaus studirt, mit heissem Bemühn.'

To the Elizabethan poetic spirits no figure was more attractive than this alchemist, magician, artist, because they felt it throbbing with popular, in the architectural extent of the word, gothic lore and life. Friar Bacon at Oxford of the brazen head that his art had made speak at least one or two short oracles, was not better known to London wits than the German legendary hero. Marlowe's crude direct shaping of him and Ben Jonson's daubed picture of middle age dreams of science are, nevertheless, dry didactic commonplace compared with the deeper working of the tale in the hearts of master artists. It was not for nothing that Hamlet studied at Wittenberg to know that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of common culture. Men of the world, good fellows like ancient or modern Horatius, walk *per ignes suppositos*

cineri doloso. 'What if it tempt you toward the flood?' and 'He waxes desperate with imagination,' are all they can do or say in the presence of the infinite. The brave man, and can he not also be the rash? goes on to question the spirit, the ghost of knowledge should it blast him. It does so oftener than not, alas! There is the key to much of *Hamlet* in Wittenberg, as to most of *The Tempest* also. Why should Prospero not be the conquering Faustus, as Hamlet was the destroyed one who sold his soul for knowledge, getting immediately revenge for his Mephistopheles, the commission which destroyed him? The times may be out of joint, but not thus comes the renovation. And that lines should join the Satan of *Job* to him of the Faust legend in the hands of Goethe, is not wonderful. The scriptural meaning of the tale was well to the front in English thought, with which Goethe's mind was saturated. Ardent student of Lessing, this of itself is proof that he was deeply acquainted with the art of England if there were not direct knowledge. To the general Saxon mind the legend of Faust was what the garden of Eden, the idyl of Galilee, and the tragedy of Jerusalem stood for to Hebraistic peoples; what the house of Tantalus and the siege of Troy represented to Hellenic cultures. The fall of man and his salvation are at the core of them all. An Orpheus descending into Hades for his bride by the power of art and his failure to save her, is a vision of the soul and its loss of the body, and has its counterpart in descents to spirits in prison, though these are more hopeful because there is a possible recovery of the bride or church in her perfection at some

final goal. There is no legend of considerable development which cannot be seen in some similar aspect in every national history. The facts beneath them all are invariable; the ornaments alone vary. In the choice of the immortal subjects the lofty and profound minds show their cunning. Of the ideal places of mind pilgrimage in Europe let Wittenberg be reckoned of great magnitude. It is not settled whether Faust is not an adumbration of the greatest of spiritual miracles since Cadmus or the early man found symbolic virtue in letters, the wonder of printing which has liberated the peoples for ever. If the magician Faust was not the discoverer of this art he or his eidolon at least found poetic hearts to aspire in the most glorious way after the visions of which some historical possible man had likely cruder more material ideas. Whether born at Weimar certainly his apotheosist was found not far thence. To barter heaven for earthly science is a bargain well known to these days; and it has its undoubted half heroism. It needs, however, a Shakespeare through a Hamlet and a Prospero, and a Goethe with a doubled Faust, to embody this dream of elements to the higher heroism of perfect spiritual health, the devil with all his legions quelled and driven out of the sacred circle of the soul to the infinity of absence. The quacks are not all quack; they have great wishes: but they lie, and their bubble hope is spoiled in the end; they must go with Mephistopheles. Through all chances of what to the weak is sin while the strong man searches for knowledge he is faithful to his noblest desires, and he becomes ultimately a maker, and immortally a divinely healthful star for his fellows, the

saved Prospero or Faust, the complete man, the eternal ruler for their delight of aspiring hearts.

Those who lift the heel against the deeper views of literature should know that nowadays the fear of being alone need not appal. The finest European minds are continually recognising depths and meanings that used to be mocked at with impunity. Some German and Dutch theologians have dug through the hard iron walls of the Christian cultus, and, still on their hands and knees, are gazing out on the free plains and seas of poetry with delight that cannot be repressed. Fruit from so dead a tree as theology of the centuries! But it is considerably new in England to meet with as much as the short statement of inner motive to poetry Green and Morley give. To compare English workmanship of the intellectual kind with that of Hebrew rabbis, Persian magi, Hindoo brahmins, Greek poets, German thinkers, will by and bye come to be the only endurable criticism to cultivated minds. The human spirit is one throughout all ages. The questions that seem peculiar and fresh to us have developed and declined in national histories before; and our main superiority ought to be the benefit we should draw from comparison of previous cases for clearer construction of art and life.

At first every individual and every nation are selfish, which is a perfectly good, because the best attainable, moral state then. The cruelties of killing fellow creatures, just as Moses ordered to be done to the Midianite women, or as childish men or boys hunt and kill for sport, are natural to the state of nationality or of personal growth. But the time comes when these things are seen

by some divining musing poetic soul as horrors, and he leads men to higher life. It is a joyous stage gained in individual or national culture when egoistic selfishness can quite wisely be taken away. The gospel this poet preaches, and often, if not by himself by his expounders, to excess, in most cases the only way to rouse, is love to others, what is sometimes called altruism. The savage aristocratic ideal must be disenthroned. 'We are the best and all others are shepherd Hebrews, Canaanites, barbarians, heathens,' has tortured and killed its thousands, men, women, and children, in the rise of the nations to maturity. The selfishness of young man or maid makes a household wretched till life is a burden to everyone there. The finer souls they are, too, makes them only the more difficult. The new ideal called conquest, colonisation, bestowing citizenship, and so forth, in the case of a nation, called conversion in the case of the individual, must be preached by the poet or maker of society. This is the democratic ideal, altruism, love of neighbour not as much as but more than yourself. Every nation has gone through these two states as its material growth proceeded, as every thinking individual does. The excess of the democratic ideal is bloody revolution and fanaticisms in sacred or secular aspect, with a nation; with an individual it has excess of adamitism, puritanism, nakedness of forms, pessimism, nirvana, idleness, or when work only destructive iconoclastic darkness of effort, because the complete forgetfulness of self being impossible, there is the conflict of duty which becomes with a strong soul so frightful that suicide appears an invertedly joyful last refuge. From this region come *Confessions*, *Hamlets*, *Sor-*

rows of Werters, and the untimely burnings, poisonings, and crucifixions. A nation does not get to its maturity till the egoistic and altruistic partial cultures are lifted up into a higher, the artistic culture, which recognises the special cultivation of each nation to be the best kindness to all other nations. Each citizen pure of body and soul, the state is; each state so, the world were Eden. An individual does not get to his manhood till his egoism is washed into the pit of the past, and his altruism with all its seeming generosity after it. He then rises to the poetic height of making art, the art of life being the greatest poetry, because active accord with the will that is neither his own nor that of others. Art comes down from heaven and goes up to it. It is the ladder of Jacob's dream by which messengers have, for all men, unceasing duty between earth and sky.

We have had a revival lately in a popular form of one of the stale altruistic gospels. 'George Eliot' has taken up with the Roman Catholic Methodism of Comte (the only part of Comte's work, let it be said, where partial genius does enter); and the earth is to be renewed, thus. For England it would be going back into the wilderness. She passed politically the altruistic state in the puritan days. St. Simon's religion this of Comte and 'the two Georges' is. Let us worship humanity, is the main proposition, ending in one man or one woman as supreme object. Comte had woman as the highest object; 'George Eliot' returns the compliment by making man ditto. The difficulty is whether virgin Mary or her son is to be worshipped, the Christian mythology puzzle. What Comte does in his extremely excessive altruism or

love of others, is of the same nature as if a gardener troubled with the winds, rains, atmosphere, and especially the sun, should determine to cover his garden altogether from them, and only use gas or candle light for his growing crops. Having kept sorrows, loves, providence, God, out of the garden they wall round and cover opaquely in called 'humanity,' Comte and 'George Eliot' would methodise, paternalise, and maternalise, till there would be nothing at all wrong in their curious Eden. They have shut out not only God but all the living animals except man, also the living vegetables; and they are quite sure there will be growth, progress, paradise now for men and women. A popish Comte, Comtess, and all the hierarchy to the most minute of scientistic officers, would not keep moral, spiritual, no, not physical life in such a hades of artificial light for the shortest time. The 'religion of humanity' is an exhausted receiver. There is Carlyle's 'cursed fraction' that must turn up awkwardly for such philosophies however enthusiastic they may be. Tyndall has with comparatively wonderful wisdom admitted that there is something beyond force and sense that *will* have its influence on human and all affairs. No brain of a Comte, not when in a somewhat higher than the philosophic state, can bind the social problem to his system. Mill and the English school cried 'Ware lark' when Comte began to sing of 'humanity' and of a new Roman Catholicism of a worse than that of old because drier godless kind. Farther and farther 'George Eliot' is getting from the poetic element that youth more than genius put in her first delightful unpretending efforts. When she attempted work of the harmonic kind, that is, wrote *The*

Spanish Gypsy and *Jubal*, it was at once felt that she had more of head than heart; that her thought was not sufficiently fused with feeling to be of the inspiring directing saving kind. Art being the only saviour of man, she failed to use it with the sufficient power. She drafts; she cannot idealise in rhythm. She is the English Hugo, almost but not altogether of the inner shrine; and they have the larger audience, meantime, because of their personal nearness to the crowd. They are skilful souls, but not all-skilful as master artists are. Such a shabby altruism as she would now preach must exclude from generous sympathy the 'poor relations' of man. There is no excuse at all at this period of English national culture for propagating the puritanic democratic ideal; for the nation is yet too democratic, though it has well recovered from, and through, the revolutionary manias of these late centuries. But the novelist's cry will die as a mere echo, having no facts to which it appealed. The Christian era altruism had unlimited generosity and dependence upon good, as foundations of its needed excess; but Comte's altruism takes the quickest smallest circle till it is again the worst of egoism, that is, tyranny. Where the divine awful element is not continually, not only acknowledged, but sought and felt, man's doings swiftly grow hot burning as a present hell. Mephistopheles is in the cellar.

Again and again must the divine souls go within the cloud that ever will be over the mount, for the only patterns according to which man can live. He who for moments can toil, away from the limitations of time and space, is the only guide to be trusted; and alas it is diffi-

cult often to draw the lines between his sight and the seeming. In the end it is only 'the influence,' of which he is the channel, that can be trusted. Men, forms, ceremonies, speeches, degrade more and more into hard and dry realisation, till again renewal comes, and must come, from the vision of another divine soul to suit his people's lives. With years, not to say centuries, those symbols once far brighter get dim to popular eyes; and a brother or sister, born with themselves, is the infinite help to lead them through the shadow of the past, the image of the present, to the reality of the future; or, in other better words, to lift the time veils, and let them pass here and now for ever into the eternity of the joy and love that have no fear. If there is always a way to the divine heights of life, the luck for a popular good time is to find a guide to ascend there again first. He knows all the famed ones who have gone before; and he is equal to taking all the benefit of that experience, for his own use and the use of his joyous fellows.

Every complete poet is ego-altruistic, or, rather, he is in the higher state that unites egoism and altruism into the artistic or supreme condition of human existence. It is the nationalities and times that may make his message egoistic or altruistic. Homer was perfectly balanced, yet the populace of the Greeks needing union for self-preservation only took the egoistic element out of his thought. So Christianity is an altruistic system, because the Roman political condition had made world intercourse safe, and opened the paths. Extending rights to all other peoples, Rome unconsciously destroyed itself. England's danger is that she takes the same road of over love of others, in

the shape of conquest or colonisation. But as to individuals, and their culture, the educated and wealthy of this country need a return, that is, a rise, from Christianity to its founder's poetry, in plain words, to all original poetry, the forms of this religion being quite dead to them. To some of the people for generations yet altruistic Christianity may, though the simple are quick to feel fresh blood in the national thought, be salvation, because they get thereby conversion from egoism to love of others. They can *live* in that 'dream' of partial beauty yet to them of entire truth. The cultivated are past this, but they are not in the artistic life. They are therefore spiritually lifeless, and are of all men now the most unhappy. Without God and without hope they are in the world. Who of the educated upper classes have had their natures revolutionised elevated etherealised as the Nazareth parables do to the people by the hidden art as is eternally necessary? Their swiftness of culture generally takes them quickly imperceptibly over the crisis time of the more ignorant; but there is a higher crisis for them, that of unity. Sorrow till then is their food and drink. All this, however, is new ground; and will require much labour before good harvest may come. One of the most curious tests of these crises in culture is seen with the Greeks. Among them highest art like all other human excellence was the subject of competition. Only in fuller days, nationally and individually, do we discover that after a certain growth and arrival at maturity, instead of struggling for goods and honours with our fellows, we would give them all we have, and are, willingly. Strangely disconcerted were the Greeks, and are moderns too of like

cultivation, in face of the mild stubborn sphinxlike fact. If he progress truly, the scholar gets disenchanted as to the supreme glory of beating his fellows. He is etherealised or converted, altruised, or, luckiest of mortals if he is artisticised into a third world of thought. Æschyluses, Sophocleses, Shakespeares, beaten in competitive struggles by others, are wonders of wonders to many souls. But there is no mystery in such matters. Competition or egoism is the shield and sword for youth; it is for growth, not for maturity. Men who are really men always shun comparison. 'We would we had more for you,' is the language of their heart. But enough of thoughts that need incubation and further infinite patience. Prose is but a broken however honest service; poesy is the perfect mastery that includes all ministration.

The last and best word is, Art for the individual and for the race is of eternal unlimited hope. All who get Ariel one moment into their service are equals, from the child to the poet. Let no man in any excluding sense believe with Emerson that 'Shakespeare is inconceivably wise; others conceivably.' The deeper and wider one studies, the more he will feel that this is only one of many cunning artists in several languages, equally infinite in their meaning and depth with him, because they all are not themselves, when at their best, but the two-edged weapon that parts all opposition and metamorphoses then into joy's sceptre. The one eternal necessity is that Ariel be rescued, at whatever pain and risk to ourselves, from the difficult tree where imprisoned and awaiting the sincere soul's mastery. With him for servant, if we only are leal to the divinity of our manhood, we are the equals of any

and all the brotherly souls. They are ever ready to give entirely joyous fellowship to him who by prime quality of soul has shown himself worthy. This is the egoism that completes the whole circle of creatures in its loving desire. Toil of every type burnishes to beauty and play. All sorrow is etherealised into what turns by transmutation the wisest sweetest joy. Life becomes a fair road dotted with visions of rapture. Formerly it was a misery of crude details without any beauty at all. The singing of birds again is heard in our land. Grief without hope cannot any more conquer. We are free.

The new transformation for the peoples, European, American, worldwide, which is at hand, will not come from abstruse mechanical systems like those of St. Simon and Comte, no more than from cold logic engines of dry knowledge. The groaning that is everywhere heard of the popular heart under the weight of dead and dying mythology, will be relieved and changed to song of joy by simplest words. Free from the grave-clothes the loved Lazarus shall immediately be. Like wildfire the truth of inmost good rushes through the hearts of the many, and woe to the things that oppose its divine impulse. Cathedrals, churches, institutions, may have to be swept like rubbish out of the way of a new vision of life, so that new buildings, new forms, new speech, new order, may give the infinite satisfaction that is the way to heaven. Three oracles now stand forth armed to go their sure road of conquest for the world's renewal. They will re-arrange all politics, institutions, and persons around them to fresh inspiring crystallisations of order and beauty at whatever struggle.

I. The poet in his singing ecstasy, his embodied harmonic vision, is the only true and safe minister of the revelation of God to the whole of the people.

II. All forms and ceremonies of society must correspond with his symbol patterns, or they are destructive.

III. This maker, he who has been in heaven, by faithful climbing of the mount, from hades through purgatory, alone knows how to lead his terrified followers up surely from the hell that is so swiftly devouring human crowds to its eternal depths.

Here is the simple gospel of another universal freedom for each individual of the people; and the work of remaking all human institutions to suit will go on apace. The deep prayer of the humane soul is that the changing may not become wild with its speed. Happy are the souls born in the days of spiritual liberty that have now dawned. They cannot choose but see. The vibration of the eternal harmony catching them, they will join the glorious procession that once again can flow at its fullest shapeliest throng towards the capitol of life, the palace of divinity, the perfect home.

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[ETC.]

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'Shakespeare we can grapple with, and Milton we can make sense of, but Sinclair is a bard that—as Dundreary says—"no fellah can understand." '—*Figaro.*

'Sonorous words here and there building themselves into fine lines; but at present the whole seems to us like some embroidered stuff seen upon the wrong side.'—*Academy.*

'The difficulty arises rather from the abstruse nature of the verse, than from any fault on the reader's part.'—*Standard.*

'Enigmatical verse is never satisfactory. Lucid ideas conveyed in language expressive and melodious are the requirements of poetry. . . . Even when such powerful intellects as that of Emerson inspire the Muse, rhyme that suggests rather than conveys ideas and images will never satisfy the reader nor the critic.'—*Morning Post.*

'Very subtle metaphysical disquisitions, in which the hero and heroine of the poem respectively analyse the fluctuations and current of their affections and the reaction of love upon life. Here the author shows not a little ability. . . . We gladly admit there are passages of no ordinary power in this work, and some descriptions which tell of an eye keenly observant and familiar with Nature. . . . There is freshness and beauty in such quaintly expressed lines as the following. . . . The whole work is one which different minds will judge so diversely that those who would judge it fairly must read it for themselves.'—*London Weekly Review.*

'Much poetical conception.'—*News of the World.*

'A strong and original thinker. . . . Neither in breadth of thought nor in poetic quality can the book be said to stand on the same level with its predecessor. There are not so many of

those fine passages in which the author's genius shakes itself free from the fetters of his style, and compels universal recognition. Such passages there are, however. Here is one, in which Mr. Sinclair, though still obscure enough, condescends to bring his meaning much nearer the surface than is his wont. . . . He is hiding what might be a very bright light under a bushel.'—*Scotsman.*

'The impression created by the perusal of Mr. Thomas Sinclair's previous volume "The Messenger" was that, notwithstanding his obscurity, his grotesque mannerisms, and a certain lack of poetic sanity, the author was possessed of an indubitable poetic faculty of a high order. . . . We fear we have not rendered a satisfactory description of this remarkable book. . . . After struggling desperately through the book, we have come to the belief that he has something worth listening to.'—*Glasgow Herald.*

'Certainly an advance on previous works, though readers must be warned that they will not find in it any of the weak sentimentalities which pass current so often for poetry, simply because they are tolerable in rhyme and very pretty as stories. Mr. Sinclair's poetry is of the highest class, too high for a good many readers, but most thoroughly enjoyable when it meets with a mind capable of appreciating its many rare beauties, the stately flow of rhyme, the elegant, polished lines, burning brightly with the fire of genius, and illuminating in undying radiance the lofty lessons which the poet has in view to inculcate. . . . A solid piece of the best workmanship.'—*Brighton Gazette.*

'Exhibits a great deal of poetic power. . . . It is full of lofty and pure feeling, but the thought is involved and the expression sometimes very puzzling. . . . Then follows the third of the "Palaces," devoted to wedded love. It is the most charming part of the book, and the verse moves with an easy, graceful motion. . . . "Vivmor," the strongest and most imaginative portion of the book, . . . is not a book that will commend itself to people who are fond of light reading: it is valuable chiefly as showing that the author has within him the possibilities of a great poet.'—*Newcastle Chronicle.*

'Work of varied character . . . some passages are admirable.'—*Manchester Examiner.*

'Much power of language . . . his metre is easy.'—*Liverpool Albion.*

'To those who are in search of something knotty to break their wits upon, we heartily commend it.'—*Nottingham Guardian*

'Fine lines.'—*Carlisle Journal.*

'Confirms by his new work the impression the former poem produced upon his critics. . . . Rare power, both of thought and language. . . . Of the depth and sweetness of some of these love poems there can be but one opinion. The following may serve as an example of their average excellence. We are far from saying it is the best that could be chosen. . . . Lovers of true poetry will not find the time employed upon this book misspent.'—*Leeds Mercury.*

'Professes to have a great mission for the regeneration of society by love and poetry, instead of faith and religion, which have been tried and found wanting. Yet he delivers his message of good tidings in such a way as to excite the suspicion that he is not altogether forgetful of his own glorification. He plays wondrous tricks with words, as if he were more anxious to attract attention to the performer, than to impart any advantage or satisfaction by the performance. If he simply desired his readers to understand and practise his teaching, he would surely have taken care to express it in a more intelligible form. Is his thought so recondite, so far-reaching, so ethereal, that the English language is not flexible, powerful, and delicate enough to express it? . . . It would almost seem as if he shrouded his meaning in mystery to hide it from the *profanum vulgus*. . . . That our readers may have an opportunity of trying their hand at interpretation, and forming their own judgment as to the merits of this strange production, we will set before them the concluding stanzas of the section entitled "Hers."' —*Dublin University Magazine.*

'We would advise Mr. Sinclair, therefore, in his own interests and those of his readers, to break through the mists and darkness with which he too often enshrouds himself, and appear in the clear radiance of practised power; for Mr. Sinclair is doubtless a poet of no mean achievement, and assuredly of greater possibilities. You ever and anon meet in his writings with striking thoughts and figures, and those felicities of expression which mark the work of genius. His tone, too, is lofty, and the aim which he sets before himself and his readers is worthy of all commendation.'—*United Presbyterian Magazine.*

'Evidently inspired by a lofty and pure conception of human love.'—*The Inquirer.*

'Is a poet, though a mystical one. If some day he will condescend to express himself so as to be understood of the common people, we believe he has in him many right noble thoughts that they will gladly read.'—*Manchester Critic.*

'Elaborate monologues, full of subtle character analysis, combined with vague mystical notions as to the redemption

which awaits the earth when it is freed from "the hell of symboldom" by "the Christ that is to be." . . . The garden into which the pair retired, an allegorical account of the garden of the soul, . . . contains many passages exhibiting great descriptive power. Witness the following graphic picture of rural life. . . . We trust that Mr. Sinclair in his next poem will give us some broad and clear views regarding human love in its divine affinities.'—*Edinburgh Courant.*

[ETC.]

POEMS.

'Refinement and poetic ambition.'—*Globe.*

'Culture, thought, vivid imagination.'—*Civil Service Review.*

'Fully realised in his own inner consciousness.'—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

'Capable of manfully grappling with the problems of life.'—*Scotsman.*

'Fine meditative fancy, rare promise.'—*Dundee Advertiser.*

'Have most poetical gifts.'—*Sunday Times.*

'Imagination and an intense love of art and beauty.'—*Antiquary.*

'Light enough for misty brightness.'—*Academy.*

'Original ideas, graphic description, genuine lyric feeling.'—*Dispatch.*

'"The Harbinger" longest, most important.'—*Standard.*

'Poetic aptitude distinguishes it.'—*Lloyd's Newspaper.*

'Sincere resoluteness of purpose.'—*Aberdeen Journal.*

'Lofty appreciation of nature of woman.'—*Belfast Whig.*

'Mystical, melancholy.'—*Literary World.*

'Certainly an original poet. . . . True poetic fire.'—*Elgin Courant.*

'Singular, not to say eccentric, turn of his genius.'—*Bristol Mercury.*

'Refinement, feeling, much vigour.'—*Perthshire Constitutional.*

'Imagination and facility of expression.—*Eastern Morning News.*

'A true poet and an original thinker.'—*Jedburgh Gazette.*

'A real contribution to our literature.'—*Leeds Mercury.*

'Of sterling worth.'—*Peterborough Advertiser.*

'Genuine poetry.'—*Edinburgh Courant.*

'The assay will not be very high.'—*Athenæum.*

'Original, cultivated mind.'—*North British Daily Mail.*

'A philosophy of life.'—*Sheffield Daily Telegraph.*

'Sonnets have meaning and melody.'—*Public Opinion.*

'His sonnets are very pretty.'—*Victoria Magazine.*

'Passages of sustained poetry.'—*Illustrated Review.*

'Thoughts are by no means clear.'—*Court Circular.*

'Pervaded with a mixture of love and melancholy.'—*Echo.*

'All equally exquisite.'—*Scarborough Mercury.*

'Glowing with beauty.'—*Brighton Gazette.*

'Has seen what he sings.'—*Northern Ensign.*

'Chosen language, true poet's genius.—*Tunbridge Wells Gazette.*

'Introspective pieces of which the present age is so prolific.'—*Graphic.*

'His efforts are praiseworthy; he abjures the "fleshly" school.'—*Hour.*

'True spirit of poesy.'—*Nottingham Guardian.*

'Exquisite precision of expression.'—*John o' Groat Journal.*

'Vast thinker.'—*Oxford Undergraduates' Journal.*

'There seems very little spirit in it.'—*John Bull.*

'Gift, inspiration, *afflatus.*'—*Edinburgh Daily Review.*

'A fresh intellectual force.'—*Stirling Journal.*